

BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF SOUTH CAROLINA

[*Anderson, South Carolina*]

HEARING #19-11761

MARCH 13, 2019

6:00 P.M.

DOCKET NO. 2018-319-E:

DUKE ENERGY CAROLINAS, LLC - Application for Adjustments in Electric Rate Schedules and Tariffs and Request for an Accounting Order

TRANSCRIPT OF TESTIMONY

AND PROCEEDINGS

VOLUME 2 OF 8

HEARING BEFORE: Comer H. 'Randy' RANDALL, *Chairman*; Justin T. WILLIAMS, *Vice Chairman*; and COMMISSIONERS John E. 'Butch' HOWARD, Florence P. BELSER, Thomas J. 'Tom' ERVIN, Swain E. WHITFIELD, and G. O'Neal HAMILTON

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P R O C E E D I N G S

CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Good evening, everyone. Welcome. We're glad to have everybody here tonight. Glad to see such a good turnout. This is your night. We are here to listen to you.

So we've got several things we need to go over, first, before we get going. First of all, I would like to introduce you to the members of the Public Service Commission. To my far right, Commissioner Justin Williams from District 6; Commissioner Tom Ervin from District 4; Commissioner Swain Whitfield from District 5. To my far left, Commissioner Butch Howard from District 1; Commissioner O'Neal Hamilton from District 7; Commissioner Florence Belser from District 2. And I'm Randy Randall; I represent District 3. We're glad to have you here tonight.

I'm going to turn it over now to our attorney, Josh Minges, for a few comments, and we'll get going.

MR. MINGES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Good evening, folks.

VOICES: Good evening.

MR. MINGES: Please silence your phones. Also, make sure you've signed at the back if you'd like to speak this evening.

1 This public hearing in Docket No. 2018-319-E
2 concerns the Application of Duke Energy Carolinas
3 for a rate increase.

4 At this time, I'd like to have the parties
5 introduce themselves with any opening statement
6 they'd like to make.

7 MS. SMITH: Good evening. Can you hear me?
8 Good evening. My name is Heather Shirley Smith.
9 I'm counsel to Duke Energy. And with us tonight I
10 would like to note we have our South Carolina
11 President, Mr. Kodwo Ghartey-Tagoe, here in
12 attendance. We also have –

13 VOICES: We can't hear you. Can't hear.

14 MS. SMITH: Can you hear? [Indicating.] Can
15 you hear me now?

16 VOICES: Yes.

17 MS. SMITH: Okay. I'll just bend, then. I'm
18 sorry. So, my name is Heather Shirley Smith. I am
19 counsel to Duke Energy and pleased to be here
20 tonight. I would like to note that we have our
21 South Carolina President, Mr. Kodwo Ghartey-Tagoe,
22 here with us this evening. I'd also like to note
23 for the members of the Commission and customers that
24 we have a team here. After you make your comments,
25 if you have something in particular you'd like to

1 discuss about your account or another matter that
2 you would like to see attended to, we have our
3 Director of Regulatory Affairs here; his name is
4 Marcus Preston. He's in the back and he's got his
5 hand raised. And we have a team of specialists from
6 Duke, should the need arise. And we're pleased to
7 be here tonight and thank the Commission for having
8 this hearing.

9 MR. NELSON: Can y'all hear me. [Indicating.]
10 How about now, is that better? The front row could
11 hear. Good evening. Welcome, and I'd like to thank
12 everybody that's showed up here tonight. My name is
13 Jeff Nelson. I'm an attorney with South Carolina
14 Office of Regulatory Staff. Our function in these
15 proceedings is we represent the public interest in
16 all cases in front of the Public Service Commission.
17 So, we are attempting to represent your interests in
18 this case before the PSC.

19 You'll please note that we are a State agency;
20 however, we are different, separate and apart, from
21 the Public Service Commission. The Public Service
22 Commission here is sitting as an independent, what
23 we call, a quasi-judicial body. You can't ask
24 questions of them because it's the same thing as if
25 you were, you know, think if you're in a criminal

1 trial and you're on the witness stand, you can't ask
2 the judge questions. The same goes here. That's
3 our job, though, is to answer your questions and to
4 talk to you, if you want to talk to us.

5 We've got several people here tonight. I have
6 Matt Schellinger in the back, here; he's with our
7 Utilities Rates and Services Department. I also
8 have Mr. Ron Aiken back here, and he is our External
9 Communications manager. I have two other people
10 with our Consumer Services Division, and we didn't
11 have quite enough room up here to set up, so they've
12 set up down on the second floor, and that's Skye
13 Dunbar and Brad Kirby, and those are both employees
14 of our agency, as well.

15 They are there to answer any questions that you
16 have. You're also welcome, if you want to stick
17 around afterwards, I will stay here and the rest of
18 the staff. We all rode together, so they're going
19 to have to stay with me. We will stay here as long
20 as you need to talk to us, and answer any questions
21 you might have about this proceeding or about the
22 case, and we'd be happy to do the best we can and
23 answer any of those questions for you.

24 That's all I have, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

25 MR. MINGES: Thank you.

1 In a moment, I'll be calling the names of those
2 that signed up to speak to come forward and be sworn
3 in. Make sure you give your name and address, and
4 then proceed with your testimony.

5 So that everyone will have a chance to speak
6 tonight, your testimony is limited to three minutes.
7 And after you're done, please remain at the podium
8 or the microphone for any questions that the parties
9 or the Commissioners might have.

10 I'd like everyone to note, like you just heard,
11 the Commissioners aren't able to take questions or
12 make comments, due to the judicial nature of this
13 proceeding, but Duke and ORS will be available after
14 the hearing for any questions you might have.

15 Also, there's another public hearing tomorrow
16 in Greenville. However, it's our policy that you
17 only speak at one public hearing. And, tonight, if
18 you hear something that you agree with that somebody
19 else's said, when it's your turn to testify, you're
20 welcome to simply adopt their testimony.

21 Mr. Chairman, the hearing where Duke will
22 present its case is going to happen on March 21st,
23 in the Commission room at Columbia. And a decision
24 is due sometime, probably, middle of May.

25 That's it, Mr. Chairman.

1 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Mr. Minges.

2 I just want to remind everyone, I know three
3 minutes doesn't sound like a long time, but it is a
4 pretty long time. So have your thoughts ready, and
5 that way we get as many people to be able to speak –
6 so that we can hear – that have signed up as
7 possible.

8 Mr. Bill Richardson will be keeping the clock.
9 You'll have the clock right in front of you, so
10 you'll be aware of your time. And we appreciate you
11 being here, and we'll start calling the first
12 witness.

13 MR. MINGES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

14 I'll be calling names two at a time. Pamela
15 Christopher, if you would please come forward and be
16 sworn in? And Genevieve Brown, you're after Ms.
17 Christopher.

18 [Witness affirmed]

19 THEREUPON came,

20 P A M E L A C H R I S T O P H E R,
21 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

22 WITNESS: Pamela Christopher, 200 Royal Oaks
23 Drive, Anderson, South Carolina 29625. Thank you.

24 I wanted to come before you today to talk with
25 you about a few things. I'm sure there'll be

1 people that'll give you testimony and talk about
2 their concerns, but let me tell you some great
3 things.

4 I want to talk with you about Duke Energy.
5 They pay \$11 million in taxes – \$11 million in
6 taxes contributed in Anderson County. They've
7 contributed \$345,000 to our community through their
8 employees giving, through the Duke Energy
9 Foundation grants. That's their charitable giving
10 in 2018. The employees gave 679 volunteer hours in
11 2018 to our organizations just in Anderson County
12 alone. So, charitable donations that they have
13 given in our community have been to Westside
14 Community Center, Omega Beautillion, Foothills
15 Alliance, Meals on Wheels, Calvary Home for
16 Children, Special Olympics, AIM, which is Anderson
17 Interfaith Ministries. They paid \$10 million taxes
18 in Anderson County – over \$10 million – and the
19 state impact they have in our – in – through – for
20 the State of South Carolina is \$6.6 billion.

21 In addition, I'd like to say I appreciate –
22 there's not a board in our county that doesn't have
23 someone that sits on it from – from Duke Energy,
24 and it's not just sitting on our board. They give
25 their time. They are active. They're sitting in

1 trying to find out what they can do to make it a
2 better Anderson County, a better region, and a
3 better State. I tell you, I have never seen more
4 committed people in our community, and I personally
5 want to thank them.

6 I tell you, there's not a time that we have a
7 storm outage or we have downed lines that our men
8 and women aren't out there responding and doing
9 everything they can to provide access to our
10 people, and they go above and beyond what their
11 work is, and I just want to thank them personally.
12 For those that are sitting in here from Duke, thank
13 you for what you do. I want to tell you, from the
14 bottom of my heart, I appreciate what you do, as a
15 citizen here in Anderson County and in the State of
16 South Carolina.

17 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Ms. Christopher.
18 Any questions from the parties?

19 [No response]

20 Commissioners?

21 [No response]

22 Thank you, very much.

23 WITNESS: Thank  you.

24 [Witness excused]

25 MR. MINGES: Genevieve Brown, will you please

1 come forward? And Inez Allen, you're after Ms.
2 Brown.

3 [Witness affirmed]

4 THEREUPON came,

5 G E N E V I E V E B R O W N ,
6 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

7 WITNESS: Genevieve Brown, 1605 North Lake
8 Drive, Anderson, South Carolina.

9 Pardon?

10 MR. RICHARDSON: Do you need me to pass these
11 out?

12 WITNESS: Yes. Just pass out 13, please.

13 [Document distributed]

14 My name is – I am a AARP South Carolina State
15 legislature volunteer and the president of AARP
16 Chapter 3693. I want to thank the Public Service
17 Commission of South Carolina for the opportunity
18 for me to share my concern about the Duke Energy
19 proposed rate hike.

20 I believe that the lower-usage customer will
21 be financially hurt by the rate shift to fixed
22 charges. Plain and simple, what Duke is attempting
23 to do is to shift the cost of the fixed facility
24 charge, and it is not based upon a probable
25 allocation of costs. I strongly believe that the

1 fixed part of my resident energy bill should only
2 include cost of the meter, cost of building,
3 collecting, and cost of the line from the street to
4 my house.

5 I read that the average Social Security
6 benefit for South Carolinians in 2019 was \$1,461
7 per month, and that depends on their work history,
8 and more than a third of the older South
9 Carolinians rely only on Social Security, not
10 including the users of SSI. The average monthly
11 disability check in 2019 for a single person is
12 approximately \$750, and \$1125 for a couple.

13 But when I see the bonus of Duke Energy
14 proposing to triple the hidden mandatory monthly
15 fee for its South Carolina customer, going from the
16 current \$8-\$9 per month, to all the way up to \$28-
17 \$29 a month, that means Duke South Carolina
18 customers would owe at least \$336 – about \$336 per
19 year before flipping on the light switch. This
20 would be the highest mandatory monthly fee of any
21 investor-owned utility in the nation.

22 But let me share with you a sprinkling of the
23 remarks from our community. “This is a prime
24 example” – quote, “This is a prime example of
25 corporate greed that hurt all of us. Customers

1 should not have to pay for a poor business decision
2 by a company that has a monopoly and earned
3 billions for profit.”

4 [Applause]

5 Another quote –

6 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: We’re taking her time,
7 so...

8 WITNESS: “We pay enough fees as it is, and
9 the one that lives on fixed income, is very hard to
10 adjust to inflation without extra fees proposed
11 from Duke Energy. It isn’t like we can shop for a
12 better service. If this rate is imposed on us, we
13 will have to live with it and do without essential
14 things as food and medicine.”

15 Another one says, “A rate hike is too high.
16 We are the customers and we have suffered this
17 monopoly that was created. I am opposed to the
18 hidden mandatory fee hike because it penalizes
19 those who use less energy rather than those who use
20 more. I also vehemently object to nuclear power
21 plants in our area. Actually, I oppose them all.”

22 [3-minute alarm]

23 Another one, “I already pay too much. I’m
24 careful not to use too many lights. I unplug
25 appliances that I am not using, turn on air

1 conditioner only when I can no longer bear the
2 heat, and Duke Energy now want more? Now, I'm a
3 senior, fixed income. I simply can't help Duke
4 profit. I work —"

5 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Ms. Brown. Your
6 three minutes is up.

7 [Applause]

8 Hang on. Hang on.

9 Are there any questions from the parties? Ms.
10 Brown, please stay at the microphone for questions.

11 [No response]

12 Commissioners?

13 [No response]

14 Okay. Thank you, ma'am. Appreciate it.

15 MR. MINGES: Ms. Brown, the papers you handed
16 out, that's a — a verbatim, I guess, list of what
17 you just said —

18 WITNESS: Right.

19 MR. MINGES: — from the microphone?

20 WITNESS: Right.

21 COMMISSIONER ERVIN: Mr. Chairman, may I ask
22 Ms. Brown a question?

23 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Yes, sir.

24 <

25 <

EXAMINATION

BY COMMISSIONER ERVIN:

Q Ms. Brown, do you think that the – the rate increase that's being requested by Duke Energy would greatly impact the – the senior citizens that you were talking about?

VOICES: Yes.

[Applause]

WITNESS: The seniors that we serve is yes.

And the other thing, the young lady talked about the kindness that Duke has given to those not-for-profits. That's wonderful, and we want to thank you, but however, that's only a small group of folks. If those folks had the money to pay, they wouldn't even be there asking for relief. So I want to thank them for what they are doing, but that should not impact what you're doing.

[Applause]

[Witness excused]

MR. MINGES: Hollie Harrell, you are after Ms. Allen.

[Witness affirmed]

THEREUPON came,

I N E Z A L L E N ,
who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

1 WITNESS: My name is Inez Allen, 415 East
2 Franklin Street, Apartment 122-B, Anderson, South
3 Carolina.

4 I live at that apartment, and some – some
5 months, I get my light bill, it's \$200-and-some;
6 sometimes, I get it, it's \$300-and-some. And if it
7 wasn't for the charity – I go out to the charity –
8 if it wasn't for charity, I'd be in the dark. And
9 I have a neighbor across from me, she come over
10 there and she dry her clothes, and I told her, I
11 said, "I'm going to this meeting today and I'm
12 going to see if we're going to have a raise – if
13 they're going to raise our light bill up." We got
14 a washer and dryer downstairs. I said, "I'm going
15 to have to get some quarters and go downstairs to
16 wash and dry my clothes, even if – if I have – do
17 have a washer in dryer in my apartment, but I can't
18 afford to pay for that and buy food and pay for my
19 medicine. Go to the doctor, I have to pay \$20
20 copay when I go to the doctor. And I pay – some of
21 my medicine run different prices, but I have to pay
22 for it.

23 And if it's – just like I say, if it wasn't
24 for charity, I'd be in the dark plenty of times –

25 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you.

1 WITNESS: – and I appreciate what they do for
2 me.

3 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, ma'am. Hang on
4 right there. Let me see if anybody has questions.
5 Any questions from the parties?

6 MR. NELSON: I do, Ms. Allen.

7 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Mr. Nelson?

8 CROSS EXAMINATION

9 BY MR. NELSON:

10 Q Could you tell me – you said your bill is about –
11 between \$200 and \$300 –

12 A Yes, sir.

13 Q – a month?

14 If they're – do you – how big is your apartment?

15 A I just got one bedroom –

16 Q Uh-huh.

17 A – but, my neighbor, she comes over there to wash and dry
18 her clothes, and then I cut off most all of my lights
19 and stuff, and I – my heat, I keep it down on 72. I
20 don't have it, you know, up high. I keep that the whole
21 year round, winter or summer, I keep it on 72, that
22 central heat and, you know, air.

23 MR. NELSON: Thank you very much. I appreciate
24 your testimony tonight.

25 WITNESS: All right.

1 [Applause]

2 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you.

3 Commissioners?

4 [No response]

5 Thank you, Ms. Allen. Thank you.

6 [Witness excused]

7 MR. MINGES: Hollie Harrell, if you'll come
8 forward? Bobby Simmons, you're after Ms. Harrell.

9 [Witness affirmed]

10 THEREUPON came,

11 H O L L I E H A R R E L L ,

12 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

13 WITNESS: My name is Hollie Harrell. I live
14 at 109 Sedgewood Court, Easley, South Carolina.

15 And I represent a public school here in
16 Anderson County, and I wanted to let you know that,
17 as much as I don't want a rate hike personally, as
18 well as my school doesn't want a rate hike, Duke
19 has given us over \$40,000 the last several years.
20 They also put in LED lights for us. We paid
21 \$100,000 in LED lights; they rebated us 75 percent
22 of that.

23 And this actually is going to save us 75
24 percent of our power bill, so this is huge for a
25 school when it comes to education. As much as I

1 don't want a rate hike, I do understand.

2 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you. Any questions
3 from the parties?

4 Everyone, if we could please stay quiet and we
5 can get – we can keep moving, get everybody's
6 questions answered.

7 Anybody else?

8 [No response]

9 Commissioners?

10 VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS: Mr. Chairman?

11 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Yes, sir. Commissioner
12 Williams?

13 VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS: Thank you, Mr.
14 Chairman.

15 EXAMINATION

16 BY VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS:

17 Q Ma'am, I'm Justin Williams from the Sixth District.
18 That's Congressman Clyburn's district. I am unfamiliar
19 with this area and so I rely on what you folks say by
20 way of education, about what's going on here. Other
21 than – other than what you tell me, I have no
22 preconceived notions or any idea about what goes on in
23 this community. I want to make sure I understand your
24 position correctly. Is your position that, because
25 Duke is so generous with their charitable giving, that

1 you don't mind the rate increase?

2 A No, that's not what I said, sir. I understand that
3 there's got to be an increase, I'm sure, but there's got
4 to be a balance in it.

5 VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS: Thank you for
6 sharing.

7 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you.

8 [Witness excused]

9 MR. MINGES: Bobby Simmons, would you please
10 come forward? And, Richard Payton, you're after
11 Mr. Simmons.

12 [Witness affirmed]

13 THEREUPON came,

14 B O B B Y S I M M O N S ,
15 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

16 WITNESS: Bobby Simmons. It's Stanley Drive
17 in Belton, South Carolina.

18 What I don't understand is that when, several
19 months ago, Duke, if I remember, called me trying
20 to get people interested in the solar system, and
21 when they used to talk about the solar system, they
22 were saying, well, this right here could help
23 reduce people's – whatever money they have to pay.
24 But, yet again, we see that they're asking for a
25 raise, and not only a small – a big raise – a small

1 raise, but they asked for a big raise as well.

2 I just don't understand what's going on.
3 Where is the money going? How is the money being
4 spent? And what catastrophe have we had in this
5 area that would cause us to want to have a higher
6 rate like that?

7 And what I – and just – and I used to pay my
8 telephone and my light bill in one payment per
9 month, but now, I got to divide it up and pay it,
10 so it's – it's a increase on everyone and – and
11 everybody having problems, but I just don't
12 understand why – why are we asking – why are you
13 asking for the rate? And if somebody could explain
14 that to me and what happened to the solar system –
15 is it really worth it or not worth it? That's all
16 I have.

17 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Mr. Simmons.

18 Questions from the parties?

19 CROSS EXAMINATION

20 BY MR. NELSON:

21 Q Mr. Simmons, can you tell me about what your monthly
22 bill is, do you think, if you know about what it is?

23 A It's usually about \$300-and-some a month.

24 Q And what – where do – where do you – what kind of
25 residence do you live in? Are you in an apartment

1 complex?

2 A Well, I live in a brick house. It's on Stanley Drive –
3 213 Stanley Drive. And it just, it – it just costs that
4 much to heat it sometimes, and to cool it, and – if you
5 want to stay comfortable, and – and I'm a retired person.

6 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Get closer to that
7 microphone so everybody can hear you.

8 WITNESS: [Indicating.] I'm a retired person
9 and – and the money I have, I got to try to spend
10 it wisely. I'm asking, why cut into my spending
11 money? Why do you – as everyone else should be.

12 MR. NELSON: Thank you. Appreciate your
13 testimony.

14 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you.

15 Commissioners?

16 [No response]

17 Thank you, Mr. Simmons.

18 [Witness excused]

19 MR. MINGES: Richard Payton, would you please
20 come forward? Youko Simmons, you're after Mr.
21 Payton.

22 [Witness affirmed]

23 THEREUPON came,

24 R I C H A R D P A Y T O N ,
25 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

1 WITNESS: Richard Payton, 220 Edinburgh Trail,
2 Anderson, South Carolina. I would just like to
3 know what this rate increase –

4 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Excuse me. Get closer to
5 that microphone.

6 WITNESS: I would like to know what this rate
7 increase is really all about. Is it for need of
8 really doing utility work, or paying executives?
9 Because a few years – about three, maybe four years
10 ago, Duke bought out an executive for \$146 million.
11 Wasn't long after that, I believe, they asked for a
12 rate increase. I just wonder if this is connected,
13 in any way, with the executives being bought out at
14 the expense of the ratepayers.

15 If they – if they want to waste money like
16 that, then why don't they give it back to the
17 people who is paying it? That's what I'd like to
18 know.

19 [Applause]

20 I have a newspaper clipping here where they
21 paid the \$146 million. The poor people out here is
22 the ones that actually paid that, not Duke Power.
23 The ratepayers, every one of us.

24 [Applause]

25 Why are we being forced to pay this rate

1 increase now? That's what I want to know. Do you
2 really need it? We – we need answers for stuff
3 like this. There's all kind of ways y'all would –
4 they send me letters thanking me for saving energy,
5 and then turn around and want to go up because I
6 saved it.

7 [Laughter, applause]

8 Where is the reason behind it, if you're going
9 to penalize the people for saving? That's
10 nonsense. Somebody at Duke Power needs to wake up
11 and see where this money is going and let us know,
12 instead of penalizing us for it and taking food off
13 of our tables –

14 VOICES: Amen.

15 WITNESS: – and giving it to somebody who
16 don't really need it.

17 [Applause]

18 I've suffered a heart attack, stroke, cancer.
19 I almost lost my foot. I'm on a low income. I
20 don't draw nowhere what she was talking about. But
21 I – you know, in the same token, I appreciate Duke
22 Power for giving me power, letting me have it.
23 But, at the same time, don't let Duke Power take
24 all the glory for these contributions when all
25 these people here did it.

1 [Applause]

2 Everybody is paying that contribution, so if
3 you stop and look at the little people, that's all
4 I've got to say.

5 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Mr. Payton.

6 [Applause]

7 [Witness excused]

8 MR. MINGES: Youko Simmons, would you please
9 come forward? Kristi King-Brock, you're after Mr.
10 Simmons.

11 [Witness affirmed]

12 THEREUPON came,

13 Y O U K O S I M M O N S ,

14 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

15 WITNESS: Can everybody hear me?

16 VOICES: Yes.

17 WITNESS: All right, awesome. My name is
18 Youko Simmons. I live at 300 Monty Drive, and the
19 reason why I came today is not to beg y'all to stop
20 this, but just to think.

21 Now, the money that I'm showing that Lynn
22 Good, CEO for Duke Energy, last year cleared \$21.4
23 million. okay. All you executives are well over
24 \$1 million, so where the money is going and why you
25 need money from – from us citizens to pay the

1 salaries that you're paying, the bonuses that I
2 realize that y'all get? I mean, something has to
3 give here. I mean, keep – keep filling up your
4 pockets and continue to take from the people who
5 don't have as much to give, already, so why – why
6 are you trying to squeeze all the milk out of the
7 people? That's a question I want to ask, and just
8 think about that. All the money that you're giving
9 out in bonuses, the money that you're paying people
10 in salaries, over \$1 million – your CEO, \$21
11 million? And I – and I notice, too, that y'all
12 profit – profit over \$2 billion.

13 Now, how many years have these billions has
14 been profit, and you're looking at people who – who
15 are just making ends, trying to rob them to pay
16 Peter, and I hate to say that, but that's what's
17 happening.

18 So it's – to me, it's a money thing. It's a
19 money thing. It's not a people thing. And if you
20 really look at it, you need to think about your
21 family that's coming behind y'all. Things do
22 happen in life – well, tragedies do happen, to
23 where you may end up being in a situation where
24 you're going to need assistance to help you.
25 Nobody on this platform, nobody's – nobody's

1 susceptible not for anything to happen to them. So
2 you need to look at the people as you try and make
3 decisions to charge these fees, this \$28, to
4 people. You look at your – your – your – your –
5 your family before you stand here today. They
6 paved the way for all of us, all of us. And then
7 to come here, to say, “Well, we want to charge \$28
8 more”? No. Well, \$20 – it’s \$8 or \$9, but you
9 want to charge them an additional \$20. That’s a
10 lot.

11 I’m trying to find out what the statistics
12 that you have, the number of people that you have
13 for Duke Energy, not only in the Carolinas, but in
14 Ohio and also in Florida. How many people are –
15 how many people have your services? Think about
16 your millions – millions of people. So think how
17 much money you will profit off of us for just \$20
18 per household, to \$28-\$29 per household. That’s a
19 lot of money, especially when you’re paying
20 salaries in all these millions – millions of – of
21 dollars. Take away some of that money.

22 [Applause]

23 It’s not like, when we pass on, we’re going to
24 take this money with us or the materialistic stuff
25 with us. No, we’re not. We came in this world

1 with nothing, and we'll leave this world with
2 nothing.

3 VOICES: Amen.

4 WITNESS: So ponder upon that. And thank you.

5 [Applause]

6 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you. Are there
7 questions from the parties?

8 [No response]

9 Mr. Nelson?

10 CROSS EXAMINATION

11 BY MR. NELSON:

12 Q Mr. Simmons –

13 A Ms. Simmons.

14 Q I'm sorry, Ms. Simmons. Ms. Simmons, could you tell me
15 what your – what your income is?

16 A No. I don't share my income.

17 Q Okay. What percentage – do you spend a large percentage
18 of your income – let me put it this way.

19 A Utilities.

20 Q – on utilities?

21 A Utilities.

22 Q Do you have any idea what percentage you might spend on
23 your utilities every month?

24 A We – well, I can tell you, though, we've spent, in the
25 summertime, between \$149 to \$200, because we also have

1 natural gas, so yes.

2 Q Thank you, ma'am. I appreciate that.

3 A You're welcome. Have a great day.

4 [Applause]

5 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you.

6 [Witness excused]

7 MR. MINGES: Kristi King-Brock, would you
8 please come forward? And, Vickie Chapman, you're
9 after Ms. King-Brock.

10 [Witness affirmed]

11 THEREUPON came,

12 K R I S T I K I N G – B R O C K ,

13 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

14 WITNESS: My name is Kristi – my name is
15 Kristi King-Brock. I'm the executive director for
16 Anderson Interfaith Ministry. We're at 1202 South
17 Murray Avenue.

18 And I just want you to know that I met with
19 the South Carolina state president a couple of
20 weeks ago to talk about this rate increase and the
21 impact that it would have on the population that we
22 serve.

23 I will tell you that, over the last 29 years,
24 Duke Energy invests about – about \$100,000 on
25 average to AIM every year, so that we can assist

1 low-income families with utilities. With this rate
2 increase, we wanted to meet with the South Carolina
3 president to look at ways that we can mitigate that
4 impact of a rate increase. And so we come with a
5 couple of proposals.

6 One is weatherization – increased funding for
7 weatherization. The majority of the families that
8 we serve have extremely high utility bills, just
9 based on the housing stock that they live in.
10 They're older; they live in mobile homes. Many of
11 these folks have little to no insulation, so their
12 utility costs are extremely high. So we would like
13 to propose that Duke look at the possibility of
14 putting some additional dollars in weatherization,
15 so we can assist clients to lower that utility
16 cost.

17 We would also like to propose Duke look at an
18 opportunity for a round-up program, so that folks
19 could round up their utility bill. The average
20 cost to anybody would be less than \$12 a year, but
21 for the folks that could afford it, that would
22 create a huge pool of money that could – could
23 assist those folks that were being impacted by this
24 rate increase with their utilities.

25 So I thank you for the opportunity to address

1 you tonight and to propose these opportunities for
2 you to invest this way.

3 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you. Thank you.

4 Any – any questions? Mr. Nelson?

5 CROSS EXAMINATION

6 BY MR. NELSON:

7 Q Yes, ma'am. You talked about weatherization a little
8 bit. Is that something that, currently, your
9 organization is involved in with Duke Energy?

10 A We are actually in conversations. We do emergency
11 rehabilitation and owner-occupied rehab for eligible
12 homeowners, and I just had a conversation with them
13 about possibly partnering with their weatherization
14 program that they have. I think currently, now, they
15 work with the Community Action partnership agencies, but
16 we would be interested in being able to piggyback that,
17 so that, when we're replacing a roof or an HVAC system,
18 we can increase the insulation and things like that in
19 the home.

20 MR. NELSON: Appreciate it.

21 VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS: Mr. Chairman?

22 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Commissioner Williams.

23 EXAMINATION

24 BY VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS:

25 Q Ma'am, thank you for sharing your suggestions. I have a

1 question for you, if you don't mind. How do you think
2 the rate increase, as proposed, will impact the customers
3 you serve?

4 A Well, I think that it – it will definitely impact the
5 folks that we serve, but I think we have to look at,
6 holistically, that fixed rate, although it will impact my
7 folks, with their high energy usage, if we can lower
8 that, then it can mitigate that impact on that client.

9 Plus you have to look at all of these folks who have
10 vacation homes. You know, we talk about how it's going
11 to impact the low-income person, but if you're – you have
12 a vacation home and you're not using any utilities,
13 you're not paying Duke anything, but if this fixed rate
14 is there, you're – you're paying that. So, for a higher-
15 income person, we have to look at that balance, as well.
16 So they're paying that fixed cost as well as that person
17 who's using utilities every – every day.

18 VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS: Thank you, ma'am.

19 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Any other – Commissioner
20 Howard?

21 EXAMINATION

22 BY COMMISSIONER HOWARD:

23 Q About how many low-income families do you assist a month?

24 VOICE: We – we can't hear him.

25 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Get the microphone on the

1 other end for Commissioner Howard.

2 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: [Indicating.] Is that
3 better?

4 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Yeah. It always helps to
5 talk into that mic.

6 COMMISSIONER HOWARD: Thank you.

7 BY COMMISSIONER HOWARD:

8 Q About how many low-income families do you assist a month?

9 A We assist about a hundred families a month with utility
10 assistance.

11 Q About what is the average assistance you give them?

12 A About \$125.

13 Q Do any other companies or utilities in the area – in your
14 service area – use round-ups?

15 A Yes. We also – we are actively involved with water
16 companies that do a round-up program. It's called H₂O
17 Help To Others.

18 My understanding is that Piedmont Natural Gas does a
19 round-up program, as well, so – I'm not sure if Blue
20 Ridge does a round-up, but I do know that those companies
21 do round-up programs.

22 Q Do you know what kind of income that produces a year, the
23 round-up, for low-income?

24 A I – I can't answer that question, sir. I'm sorry.

25 Q That's all right. Thank you very much.

1 A Uh-huh.

2 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Ms. Brock. I –
3 and I would suggest talking to Mr. Marcus Preston
4 back there, with Duke, to – to give him those
5 suggestions, too, to make sure they get those.

6 WITNESS: Okay. Thank you very much.

7 [Applause]

8 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you for being here.

9 [Witness excused]

10 MR. MINGES: And Joe Davenport, you're after
11 Ms. Chapman.

12 [Witness affirmed]

13 THEREUPON came,

14 V I C K I C H A P M A N ,

15 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

16 WITNESS: My name is Vicki Chapman. I live at
17 3204 McCurley Street, in Anderson, South Carolina,
18 ZIP Code 29626.

19 I'm going to talk about something different
20 that hasn't been brought up: the theft of Duke
21 Energy. Right here, 1992, Mr. Harrison Lee Franks
22 that lives down the street, meth head, stealing.
23 Y'all finally did the cable on the old pole up to
24 the very top –Duke Energy. It took them almost four
25 hours. This is a big problem in Anderson.

1 Now, there's another house up the street, 601
2 Emma Street, he's a drug dealer. He's stealing
3 right now. I called Friday. I always call to Duke
4 Energy. They connect me to Energy Protection. Call
5 them and see how many times Vicki Chapman has
6 called. It tore my nerves up so bad last year,
7 these people stealing, and we're paying for that.
8 And I am trying to tell y'all, this is a big
9 problem.

10 We've got to take that cable on those old
11 poles – and you know what I'm talking about; they're
12 tapping in from the bottom. We've got to do what
13 they did to that one house across the street from
14 me, that's on drugs. They took that cable and put
15 it all the way to the top of the pole so they can't
16 steal it anymore. Okay?

17 Now, when y'all get that theft problem
18 straightened out, then let's come back and talk
19 about maybe raising the rates a little bit, but this
20 theft is very serious. Very serious. And you know
21 what? I didn't get a penny for doing this. I was
22 just a good citizen, not wanting a meth head to get
23 free power when I have to pay our bill, and they do,
24 too.

25 [Applause]

1 I also – I also had him arrested – y'all
2 arrested him again last September the 4th, 2018.

3 This [indicating] is 1992, civil suit, Duke
4 Energy. Here's the case number. I want y'all to
5 take this paper. I can get another one. Please
6 take it.

7 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Ms. –

8 WITNESS: And I'm going to talk –

9 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: – Chapman, who arrested
10 this person? Who had him arrested?

11 WITNESS: Duke Energy, because I –

12 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Do they –

13 WITNESS: – called so many times and told
14 them –

15 CHAIRMAN: Duke Energy did it.

16 WITNESS: – I said, "I will not let these
17 people steal your power, and me have to pay a bill."

18 So we have a – over – I understand we have
19 about 150 people right now – now, listen, this guy,
20 Harrison Lee Franks on this paper, his mother is
21 deceased. It says, "Vera," but Harrison Lee Franks
22 is still living down there. Listen, do you know
23 he's an imposter for y'all? He's going around
24 hooking up free power, and people are paying him
25 \$300 to do it. I want an attorney on this, this

1 time, if it goes to court. He was arrested again,
2 September the 4th. Remember, September the 4th,
3 2018, Harrison Lee Franks. I want the attorney to
4 be present for Duke Energy, because this is serial
5 theft.

6 [3-minute alarm]

7 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you. Ms. Chapman, I
8 will suggest you talk, also, with Mr. Preston, from
9 Duke –

10 WITNESS: I – I – yeah. When y'all said that –

11 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: – so that we can –

12 WITNESS: – then, so – really, take care of
13 this theft problem, please.

14 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Questions from – Mr. Nelson?

15 MR. NELSON: First – first of all, we have the
16 document here, Mr. Chairman. I'd – I'd ask that
17 that be entered into the record.

18 And, while I'm on it, because I forgot to do
19 this in the intro, I would also like to have moved
20 into the record the sign-in sheets from the hearing
21 tonight.

22 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Okay. The sign-in sheets
23 will be entered as Hearing Exhibit No. 3 and –

24 MR. NELSON: And I do have a couple of
25 questions, too.

1 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: And this will be – and we're
2 going to enter this as Hearing Exhibit 4. Thank
3 you.

4 [WHEREUPON, Hearing Exhibit 4 was marked
5 and received in evidence.]

6 MR. NELSON: Thank you.

7 WITNESS: And – and, sir, this Robert Scott
8 Bassar, that's a drug dealer right up the street
9 from me. I called Friday. He's a drug dealer, this
10 Scott Bassar, B-a-s-s-a-r. I want y'all to go do
11 something. He's got a decoy hanging over a fence of
12 loose wire, six to eight feet. He needs to be
13 stopped. He's a drug dealer.

14 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, ma'am. Mr.
15 Nelson?

16 CROSS EXAMINATION

17 BY MR. NELSON:

18 Q Ms. Chapman, in addition – you do need to talk to the
19 company about this, but additionally, I – I've got a lot
20 of questions and I can't get them all answered right now.
21 If you would see our folks down on the second floor, we
22 have a table set up down there. It says, "Consumer
23 Services, Office of Regulatory Staff." If you would
24 please stop by and – and leave your contact information,
25 I would appreciate that.

1 A And if y'all could hire me to be undercover for Duke,
2 y'all would be –

3 [Applause]

4 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you. Thank you, Ms.
5 Chapman. Hang on, Ms. Chapman. Ms. Chapman. Ms.
6 Chapman. Thank you.

7 MR. MINGES: Now, Ms. Chapman, is the –

8 WITNESS: Yes, sir.

9 MR. MINGES: – is the date on that document?

10 WITNESS: Yes, sir. Listen –

11 MR. MINGES: Is it in –

12 WITNESS: – it's in writing. I pulled it up
13 because it's not on the computer, it goes so far
14 back. 1992 civil suit, case number.

15 MR. MINGES: 1992, okay.

16 WITNESS: Okay. Now, last year –

17 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Ms. Chapman.

18 WITNESS: – there's going to be another suit
19 that goes to trial.

20 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, ma'am.

21 Appreciate it.

22 [Applause]

23 [Witness excused]

24 MR. MINGES: Joe Davenport, would you please
25 come forward? And, Richard Allums, you're after Mr.

1 Davenport.

2 [Witness affirmed]

3 THEREUPON came,

4 J O E D A V E N P O R T ,

5 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

6 WITNESS: I'm kind of wearing two hats here
7 tonight, one as the AARP and one as an individual.
8 And I have not – I've been blessed not to have had a
9 problem, but if this increase goes in, I am going to
10 start having trouble, because I lost \$252,000 to the
11 government at one time, for services rendered, so I
12 think that I'm due some consideration of that. I
13 had no problem with that, except we went to court
14 and they finally said they weren't going to pay,
15 period.

16 But I have served in this community, I have
17 served the State, I've served this nation, and I
18 want that to be in the record, that I am concerned
19 about the people that Genevieve talked about.

20 We have about 1700 people in this district –
21 people homeless, and I don't know how much power is
22 taken by them, but they deserve whatever you can
23 give them, because the people need to do that.

24 And also, we've got so many people that is
25 underpaid in this area, and Social Security is a bad

1 thing for not raising their rates equal to what the
2 inflation is. And I would like to see that done,
3 and that has to be done, I know, at the national
4 level, but I would like for you to do the power.
5 And Duke Power – I have been friends with them
6 personally for a long time, but this is going over
7 the top for our poor people, and I want something
8 considered. And I have known other people that
9 were – you took their place many years ago, when I
10 went into the café down there and they started
11 playing *Orange Blossom Special* when I went in down
12 there. So, I think Tom Ervin can tell you something
13 about me.

14 But I want you to know that Duke has a lot of
15 money that goes into a subsidy and – whatever the
16 name of that is. It's a corporate thing that
17 everybody – every big corporation does it, and
18 that's how they give money out of that. But I do
19 not think that this is the time for a rate increase,
20 and I think that you need to hold off till Santee
21 Cooper and SCANA and every – Dominion – all get
22 their act together, because I see Duke Power selling
23 out to Dominion, and God knows what'll happen to us
24 then. So I don't want that to happen, and I know
25 that this is in the works.

1 There is a federal investigation going on right
2 now, and there has been a State one. I don't know
3 who bought that out, but a lot of our General
4 Assembly went on trips with Duke Power and –

5 [3-minute alarm]

6 – all the other. Hold that.

7 [Laughter]

8 This is something that I see in the future, I
9 see it happening, and I'm not wrong too many times.
10 And tell Jim Clyburn I said, "Hey."

11 [Applause]

12 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Mr. Davenport.
13 Hang on one second and let's see if we've got any
14 questions for you.

15 Any questions from the parties?

16 MR. NELSON: I don't have any questions, but
17 thank you, Mr. Davenport. I appreciate your
18 testimony.

19 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Commissioners?

20 [No response]

21 Thank you, Mr. Davenport.

22 [Applause]

23 [Witness excused]

24 MR. MINGES: Mr. Allums, you're after Mr.
25 Davenport, if you would come forward. And, Talena

1 Stewart, you're after Mr. Allums.

2 [Brief pause]

3 Richard Allums, would you please come forward?

4 [No response]

5 Okay. Talena Stewart, would you please – are
6 you Mr. Allums?

7 MR. ALLUMS: [Nodding head.]

8 [Witness affirmed]

9 THEREUPON came,

10 R I C H A R D A L L U M S ,
11 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

12 WITNESS: Richard Allums, and my address is 118
13 Kirsch Drive in Williamston, 29697.

14 I will give everybody here a break. I'll be
15 short and sweet, to the point. Please don't do what
16 you're proposing to do. It will be a hardship on a
17 lot of people.


18 My wife and I, we are on a fixed income like a
19 lot of people. And I think about young families
20 with kids and trying to make it. Just please don't
21 do what you're proposing. It's way too much, too
22 greedy. Thank you.

23 VOICE: Amen.

24 [Applause]

25 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Mr. Allums.

Questions from the parties? Mr. Nelson.

MR. NELSON: Sir, can you spell your last  name?

WITNESS: Spell it?

MR. NELSON: Yes.

WITNESS: A-l-l-u-m-s.

MR. NELSON: Thank you. Nothing further.

Thank you for your testimony.

CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you. Commissioners?

[No response]

Thank you, Mr. Allums.

[Witness excused]

MR. MINGES: Talena Stewart, would you please come forward? And, Lester Hardegree, you're after Ms. Stewart.

[Witness affirmed]

THEREUPON came,

T A L E N A S T E W A R T ,

who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

WITNESS: My name is Talena Stewart, T-a-l-e-n-a, S-t-e-w-a-r-t. I live at 122 Hurst Avenue, Anderson, South Carolina 29625.

Thank you for the opportunity to have us speak and hear us out. As I watched the entire session yesterday on Facebook Live, there were few people who were my age, millennial generation. I came to

1 show that we care, too. You know, we may not be on
2 fixed incomes, but I don't think that I need to work
3 like a dog to pay my bills. Most of us have kids
4 and so I decided to come because I know a lot of
5 them, too.

6 The people who are elderly and disabled, they
7 will suffer the most from this increase, but they
8 will not be the only ones.

9 I would consider myself the middle class, and I
10 live paycheck-to-paycheck. I graduated from Clemson
11 with a bachelor's degree. I work for a city
12 municipality, and I'm in my major that I graduated
13 with. Every decision I made was to further my life,
14 not stand still. All of my bills are paid. My
15 family is fed, thankfully. After utilities and my
16 student loans, I have just enough for gas. I cannot
17 afford an increase in the rate. I am more fortunate
18 than others, yet I will have to be – work overtime
19 to pay for this increase, which is not always
20 available, even with the city.

21 You know that our community does not want this,
22 nor can we afford it. Please do not allow this to
23 happen. I am here tonight because – I'm here
24 tonight instead of helping my child study for a
25 test, and the people who know me know I don't take

that lightly. I am here tonight instead of cooking dinner for my family. I'm here tonight willing to stay up late, if I had to, to be at work at five in the morning.

Do not let my time, taken away from my family, be a waste. Do not approve this. Stand up for us, the people who make the upstate and South Carolina the great State that it is. Thank you.

[Applause]

CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Ms. Stewart.

Questions from the parties?

[No response]

COMMISSIONER ERVIN: Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Okay.

COMMISSIONER ERVIN: May I —

CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Commissioner Ervin.

COMMISSIONER ERVIN: - may I ask Ms. Stewart a question?

EXAMINATION

BY COMMISSIONER ERVIN:

Q Thank you for coming today and – and speaking up. I think you – you're right, that not that many millennials have the time or take the time to let us know how they feel about this. You're right, I think it does have a heavy impact on the elderly. But I'm – I'd like to know,

1 do you find that your other costs are going up, as well?

2 You have – you said – how many children do you have?

3 A I have one stepson.

4 Q Okay. And he's how old now?

5 A Eleven. He's eleven.

6 Q Uh-huh. So you have – you have to buy clothes for him,
7 and you have doctor bills for him, as well?

8 A Yep. And I have student loans. I'm in a government
9 program, public-service loan forgiveness, but, in ten
10 years, I'm going to have it paid off because the income-
11 driven rate is still doubling each year, so I'm – I get a
12 raise at work and they take it away, so I –

13 Q You –

14 A – I can't get ahead.

15 Q Where are you working now?

16 A I work for the City of Greenville.

17 Q Great. But you're living in Anderson County?

18 A Uh-huh.

19 Q Well, I appreciate you coming forward and letting us know
20 the impact it would have on – on you. Thank you.

21 A Thank you.

22 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Ms. Stewart.

23 [Applause]

24 [Witness excused]

25 MR. MINGES: Lester Hardegree, would you please

1 come forward? Holley Ulbrich, you're after Mr.
2 Hardegree.

3 [Witness affirmed]

4 THEREUPON came,

5 L E S T E R H A R D E G R E E ,
6 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

7 WITNESS: Good evening, Commissioners. My name
8 is Lester Hardegree. I reside at 164 Tully. The
9 ZIP is 29621, here in Anderson.

10 My wife and I are both retired and on a fixed
11 income, and moved to Anderson one year ago from
12 Bluffton. We got tired of evacuating with
13 hurricanes.

14 After purchasing our home, we began the process
15 of making major improvements associated with energy
16 savings. I thoroughly reviewed the Duke Energy
17 website titled "Save energy and money," and also
18 contacted them by phone about their Smart\$aver
19 rebate programs. It states that one can get up to
20 \$1525 in home rebates if you implement certain
21 energy savings for your home. What a joke.

22 Duke Energy has only one approved participating
23 contractor in the City of Anderson and another one
24 in Greenville. And his estimated – the Anderson
25 contractor – estimated cost for replacing our HVAC

1 system was many thousand dollars more than any of
2 the other reputable contractors I contacted.

3 I spoke with multiple HVAC contractors in
4 Anderson and they all told me that they would not
5 become affiliated with or participate in the Duke
6 Energy rebate programs for various reasons. There
7 has got to be some legitimate reasons why none of
8 the contractors, except one, will get involved with
9 Duke Energy.

10 Even so, my wife and I went ahead and
11 completely replaced the three dated and poor-
12 efficiency HVAC systems with a high-energy SEER
13 split system and a gas furnace. We replaced two
14 energy-consuming water heaters with a single high-
15 efficiency unit.

16 Commissioners, my wife and I have spent
17 thousands of dollars to make our home more energy
18 comfortable and efficient with the hope of having
19 lower energy bills as retirees, and this was done
20 without any Duke Energy rebate.

21 Four of the fifteen LED light bulbs which Duke
22 provided us have already burned out in less than a
23 year. No savings there. And we truly did not
24 benefit from the Duke Energy home evaluation that
25 was conducted on our home.

1 The point is, from my perspective, Duke Energy
2 talks about and promotes energy conservation, but
3 they're – they – I have not realized any savings.
4 In fact, our energy costs have been much higher.

5 On their website, in two different statements,
6 Duke Energy talks about providing customers with the
7 tools to make a real difference in energy use and
8 saving money. I think that's a joke. Okay?

9 In conclusion, my wife and I are irate that
10 Duke Energy wants to increase our electric rates –
11 electricity rates. Commissioners, you –

12 [3-minute alarm]

13 – have an ethical and moral responsibility to
14 deny this rate increase.

15 [Applause]

16 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Mr. Hardegree.

17 Questions? Mr. Nelson?

18 CROSS EXAMINATION

19 BY MR. NELSON:

20 Q Mr. Hardegree –

21 A Yes.

22 Q – have you seen any kind of reduction in your energy bill
23 with all these – with all these investments that you made
24 in energy efficiency?

25 A I have not, at this time.

1 MR. NELSON: Thank you.

2 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Commissioner Williams.

3 VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS: Thank you, Mr.
4 Chairman.

5 EXAMINATION

6 BY VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS:

7 Q Sir, did you receive any rebate whatsoever for installing
8 the high-efficiency HVAC unit?

9 A No, we did not. Even though I had contacted Duke Energy
10 prior to the installation and talked with multiple people
11 in that rebate department, they told me they had one
12 contractor in Anderson. And, again, I communicated to
13 the person on the phone with Duke Energy that his
14 estimate was thousands more than any other reputable
15 dealer, and they said, "Well, he's approved and that's
16 all we can do."

17 I even wrote a letter to Duke Energy and a VP called
18 me back, and I communicated all of my concerns. And,
19 basically, the answer was, "Sorry. Can't help you out."

20 Q And so was it your understanding that, in order to
21 benefit from the program, you had to go through that
22 contractor?

23 A That same one contractor, yes.

24 Q Okay. Did you ever consider contacting the Office of
25 Regulatory Staff?

1 A No.

2 Q If you have time, would you mind sharing your story with
3 the Office of Regulatory Staff?

4 A I'll be glad to.

5 VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS: Okay.

6 Jeff, if you could take his information down.

7 MR. NELSON: Mr. Hardegree, if you'd go down –
8 when you – whenever you leave here, either now or
9 later, if you'd go down to the second floor, I've
10 got two people at a table – we have a big banner on
11 it down there and it says, "Office of Regulatory
12 Staff," and we'd – we'd love to talk to you.

13 WITNESS: Thank you.

14 MR. NELSON: Thank you, sir.

15 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Commissioner Ervin.

16 COMMISSIONER ERVIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

17 EXAMINATION

18 BY COMMISSIONER ERVIN:

19 Q Lester, I appreciate you calling this to our attention.
20 Certainly, a program that's being promoted and advertised
21 like this, don't you agree that they should have more
22 than one authorized contractor for a county this size?

23 [Applause]

24 If they're going to promote it, then they need to –
25 they need to have several to choose from that are – that

1 are available to you, so I was not aware of this problem,
2 but we certainly appreciate you bringing it to our
3 attention.

4 A And let me just, on – on the record, communicate that
5 they did indicate two contractors. Again, one was in
6 Anderson and the other is in Greenville, and that is
7 still current as of two or three nights ago.

8 Q But Greenville is a good ways away, and that's just –
9 that's going to add to the cost of transportation. So
10 they should have more than one in – in a county this
11 size, and, so –

12 A I would – I would think so, if they were serious about
13 helping us customers save energy.

14 Q And I'd like to – I'd like for the ORS to find out why
15 other contractors are not taking or making attempts to
16 become authorized for this type of service. There –
17 there must be some reasoning, so we – we need to look
18 into it. Thank you.

19 A Thank you.

20 [Applause]

21 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Mr. Hardegree.

22 [Witness excused]

23 MR. MINGES: Holley Ulbrich, would you please
24 come forward? And, Jody Gaulin, you're after Ms.
25 Ulbrich.

[Witness affirmed]

THEREUPON came,

H O L L E Y U L B R I C H ,

who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

WITNESS: I'm Holley Ulbrich. I live at 2 Birch Place in Clemson, South Carolina. I am a long-time Duke Energy customer, co-president of the League of Women Voters of South Carolina, and an economist.

When the State grants a utility exclusive access to customers in a geographic area, they create a monopoly. In exchange for that privilege, the monopoly is subject to regulation, in the public interest, to protect the interest of customers, adjacent property owners, State and local governments, and other stakeholders. Monopolies often face competition in some segments of their business. Such is the case for Duke, which is now competing with lower natural-gas prices and expanding solar.

When that happens, monopolies turn to price discrimination to protect their revenues. In response to competition, monopolies charge higher prices to those customers who cannot easily shift to other kinds of power and lower prices to customers

1 who can, who can install solar panels or convert
2 some of their energy use to natural gas.

3 Low-income households do not have that kind of
4 flexibility and actual usage doesn't have that much
5 effect on their bill, so they have no place to turn
6 except the PSC.

7 If you look at some of the charts, including
8 Duke's own charts, you will find that the proposed
9 rates cause electric bills to rise substantially at
10 the lower-income – lower end of the usage scale, and
11 declines at the high-usage end. Those are the ones
12 who are most financially able to turn to other –
13 other forms of energy. It just happens that lower –
14 low users are predominantly, but not exclusively,
15 poor, elderly, and/or renters.

16 Duke isn't intentionally discriminating against
17 those least able to protect themselves from this
18 rate hike, but that is the effect. It's up to the
19 PSC to act on their behalf. Thank you.

20 [Applause]

21 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Ms. Ulbrich.

22 Questions from the parties?

23 MR. NELSON: I'm afraid to ask you anything.

24 [Laughter]

25 I appreciate your testimony. Thank you for

1 coming.

2 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you. Commissioners,
3 any questions?

4 [No response]

5 Thank you, Ms. Ulbrich.

6 [Witness excused]

7 MR. MINGES: Todd Moore, you're after Ms.
8 Gaulin.

9 [Witness affirmed]

10 THEREUPON came,

11 J O D Y G A U L I N ,
12 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

13 WITNESS: My name is Jody Gaulin. That's J-o-
14 d-y G-a-u-l-i-n. I live at 14035 Richardson Drive,
15 Seneca, South Carolina.

16 I've got the same concerns that many have
17 already been voicing here, but I'd like to talk
18 about some other issues related to utilities' rates
19 in general, and Duke utility rates specifically.

20 Duke has also said it needs this increase in
21 order to do grid modernization. I'm all for making
22 our electric grid more modern, efficient, and more
23 stable, but this should save ratepayers money, not
24 cost them. Savings associated with a more efficient
25 grid should be shared with the ratepayers. Projects

1 like modernizing the grid, upgrading production
2 facilities, and replacing equipment should be
3 considered capital projects. These should be
4 financed as such – and I have a background in
5 business and industry in this State.

6 If we learned anything from the \$9 billion –
7 and, folks, that's \$9 billion, with a B. And Ocone
8 and Anderson people didn't pay too much attention to
9 the SCANA debacle, the V.C. Summer debacle, but now
10 it's coming home to roost. So if we've learned
11 anything from that, then we should know that the
12 ratepayer should not pay in advance for capital
13 projects that may never be finished, and where –

14 [Applause]

15 – and where the utility has no incentive to
16 bring a project in on time and within budget.

17 Why can't utilities like Duke issue industrial
18 bonds or secure other financing arrangements to
19 implement capital projects and, once completed, come
20 to the PSC with the data to support a rate increase
21 to pay back the funding over a fixed period of time?
22 Any savings associated with a project can then be
23 shared by the investors and the ratepayers. This
24 type arrangement forces the utility to carefully
25 design and manage their projects and complete them

1 on time.

2 We need transparency. I can't see the
3 justification for this rate-increase scheme today.
4 I don't see the data.

5 Don't make another V.C. Summer mistake. Ask
6 for the data. Make Duke prove their case. Thank
7 you.

8 [Applause]

9 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Ms. Gaulin.

10 Mr. Nelson?

11 MR. NELSON: I don't have any questions, but
12 thank you for coming out and testifying. Appreciate
13 it.

14 WITNESS: Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you.

16 Commissioners?

17 [No response]

18 Thank you, ma'am.

19 [Witness excused]

20 MR. MINGES: Todd Moore, would you please come
21 forward? Ann Axelson, you're next.

22 [Witness affirmed]

23 THEREUPON came,

24 T O D D M O O R E ,

25 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

1 WITNESS: My name is Todd Moore and I live at
2 15 Marina View Circle, Salem, South Carolina.

3 I stand today in opposition to the 12-plus
4 percent rate increase that Duke Power is requesting.
5 Raising the basic utility charge for \$8.35 to \$28.89
6 is an outrageous increase. This is an increase
7 that'll apply to everyone, and especially harm folks
8 who live in small homes to try to minimize their
9 power usage. This especially hits seniors, low-
10 income people, and people who are diligent in
11 reducing their electricity consumption.

12 It is well documented that the introduction of
13 compact fluorescent lightbulbs, LED lightbulbs,
14 improved insulation, solar, and other technologies
15 has reduced the forecasted electricity demand over
16 the last 15 years. Apparently, Duke missed this
17 forecast and now wants to pass on their base costs
18 to the consumer, rather than manage their own
19 business.

20 Hear from the ratepayers and balance your
21 interest of the utility's. Do your job. Please
22 vote no.

23 [Applause]

24 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Mr. Moore.

25 Any questions of the parties?

1 [No response]

2 Commissioners?

3 [No response]

4 Thank you, sir.

5 WITNESS: Okay.

6 [Witness excused]

7 MR. MINGES: Ms. Axelson, you're next. James
8 Ballard, you're after Ms. Axelson.

9 [Witness affirmed]

10 THEREUPON came,

11 A N N A X E L S O N ,

12 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

13 WITNESS: Hi. My name is Ann Axelson, A-x-e-l-
14 s-o-n, 11 Quartermaster Drive, Salem, South Carolina
15 29676.

16 I appreciate that the Commission has sponsored
17 this hearing tonight and is giving the public the
18 opportunity to speak to you about something that's
19 clearly so important to so many of us.

20 I've heard a lot of things I agree with
21 tonight. There are so many things I don't like
22 about this rate increase, I had to kind of
23 prioritize a few of them.

24 The first one is the timing. The timing of
25 when Duke Energy announced this increase was a

1 little bit suspect, given that it was two days after
2 the election. I think, with the V.C. Summer debacle
3 fresh on everyone's minds that the last thing they
4 wanted to do was pop this on us and potentially hurt
5 their friends at the Legislature right before the
6 election. But now we have it, so what does this
7 mean for all of us?

8 I think that it's very troubling that, by
9 tripling the basic facilities charge, Duke is going
10 to punish the very customers who can least afford
11 it. I am on a fixed income. I'm a senior citizen,
12 and I am luckier than a lot of people in this room.
13 I'm luckier than a lot of people that I've met in
14 Oconee County, because I do have some retirement
15 income to augment my fixed income, but that's not
16 true of a lot of the people I know and a lot of the
17 people I've met since I've moved to this area.

18 And the rate increase is actually rewarding
19 people for not conserving electricity. In this day
20 and age, that makes no logical sense to me. People
21 who want to do the right thing by using LED bulbs,
22 adding insulation, as we've talked about, and
23 installing solar are going to be hit the hardest by
24 this particular rate increase. That just doesn't
25 make sense.

1 But having spent 32 years as a federal
2 government contracts manager, the thing that bothers
3 me the most here is the lack of transparency: the
4 lack of transparency in how this is being
5 calculated, why this is being – why this is needed.
6 As you've heard testimony on some of these large
7 bail-out or sell-outs to some of the executives, I
8 think we deserve to know what this is going to pay
9 for. We shouldn't be paying prospectively for
10 things that we don't have the data on.

11 I was taught as a businessperson, years ago, to
12 manage by fact. So where's the proof that the cost
13 per household to cover Duke's cost, plus profit, is
14 \$299 a year? Where is that data? Where's the law
15 that prevents sharing the base cost proportional to
16 the usage? We don't want to destroy the incentive
17 to conserve.

18 And, also, other industries don't guarantee
19 profit –

20 [3-minute alarm]

21 – and so that's a concern, as well.

22 Thank you for your time. I appreciate it.

23 [Applause]

24 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Ms. Axelsson.

25 Questions from the parties? Mr. Nelson.

CROSS EXAMINATION

BY MR. NELSON:

Q Ms. Axelson –

A Yes, sir.

Q – can you – what is your average bill? What do you –
what do you run about a month?

A My bill ranges anywhere from \$120 to \$320.

Q Depending on the season, I guess?

A Depending on the season.

Q So a lot of heating-and-air costs?

A Yes. And I have a – an exact experience to the
gentleman who spoke a couple before. When I moved here
seven years ago, I had to redo all of my HVAC systems.
I did all the due diligence that he was talking about,
in terms of looking to see what Duke Energy would do in
terms of encouragement to replace really old units that
weren't very efficient, and I found no help.

Q So any other – I mean, it sounds like you reached out to
Duke to try and –

A Yes.

Q – get in front of it.

A Yes, and we – and we even had a Duke person come out and
do that home inspection that he was talking about. We
had that, as well. And – but that was – that was really
almost a joke, honestly. I could've – I could've walked

1 through my house and given you a longer list, so...

2 [Laughter]

3 And I'm an English major.

4 MR. NELSON: Thank you for testifying. I
5 appreciate it.

6 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Ms. Axelson.

7 VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS: Mr. Chairman. I have
8 one question.

9 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Ms. Axelson, hang on one
10 second. Commissioner Williams has a question for
11 you.

12 WITNESS: Yes.

13 EXAMINATION

14 BY VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS:

15 Q Ma'am —

16 A Yes.

17 Q — you come across as very educated on the issues, and I
18 appreciate that. I agree with you that transparency is
19 important. What I would ask is that you get with a
20 member of the Public Service Commission staff. We have
21 a docket management system that's online, just for
22 transparency, so all the — all the documents that Duke
23 Energy files at some point will be available in the
24 docket online, and you have an opportunity to read and
25 review. Also —

1 A Good.

2 Q – our hearings are live-streamed, so you have the
3 opportunity to view those. So, again, I agree that
4 transparency is important, so you can hold all parties
5 accountable, including this Commission. So if you
6 would, please, get with our office to make sure – I
7 don't know the website off the top of my head.

8 MR. NELSON: Ms. Axelson, you can either hang
9 around and talk to me afterwards, or you could talk
10 to our people down on the second floor. They
11 should be able to help you.

12 WITNESS: Okay.

13 MR. NELSON: If nothing else, leave your
14 information down there. I'll be happy to call you
15 or –

16 WITNESS: I would very much like to look at
17 that, because I've spent a lifetime of – of
18 reviewing federal proposals from various
19 contractors. I would never pay a federal
20 contractor cost plus percentage of costs. That
21 appears to be what we're doing.

22 [Applause]

23 MR. NELSON: I will tell you, too, we have
24 about three books about that thick [indicating]
25 that I've run off now, in testimony, primarily from

1 the company – exhibits, testimony. There's a lot
2 of information there, and the hearing – you could
3 live-stream it, but unless you've got a week to sit
4 in front of your computer, you probably would be
5 better off going to read stuff.

6 WITNESS: Okay. Thank you.

7 MR. NELSON: We'll be happy to get that
8 information –

9 WITNESS: I appreciate the information.

10 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Ms. Axelson.

11 [Witness excused]

12 MR. MINGES: Mr. Ballard, please come forward.
13 Lewis Keasler, you're after Mr. Ballard.

14 [Witness affirmed]

15 THEREUPON came,

16 J A M E S K E L L E R ,
17 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

18 WITNESS: My Name is James Keller. I live at
19 203 Oak Knoll Terrace, Anderson, 29625.

20 My wife and I are retired and moved here from
21 central – north-central Arkansas two years ago, and
22 we've been blessed to purchase a beautiful 2600-
23 square-foot brick home. It's got 20 inches of
24 blown-in insulation throughout the roof, a high-
25 efficiency water heater that I just put in last

1 year. The HVAC unit has been serviced twice a year
2 by me and seven years previously by the previous
3 owner. And we just recently put solar panels on
4 the roof, zero net, last July. And my last two
5 months' bills have still been over \$130. I realize
6 we've had a lot of cloudy and cold days, but I feel
7 like this additional rate increase is just – it's
8 too much for people on fixed incomes.

9 I'm a member of Vets Helping Vets. Anderson.
10 I'm a Vietnam veteran. And I'm truly blessed to
11 live here in South Carolina. But this rate
12 increase is really going to hit people on fixed
13 incomes, like me and many others who aren't nearly
14 as blessed as I am.

15 But if South Carolina's intention is to draw
16 more businesses to this State and employees to work
17 in these new businesses, they're going to think
18 twice about the rate increases that Duke Energy is
19 proposing for their employees to come from other
20 states to live here. And it's just not fair and it
21 should be denied. Thank you.

22 Oh, I've got a proposition. I think seniors,
23 disabled, and veterans should be exempt from the
24 utility charges.

25 [Applause]

1 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Hang on just a minute and
2 let me see if there are any questions.

3 Any questions from the parties?

4 MR. NELSON: I don't have any questions for
5 Mr. Keller. Thank you for coming out to testify.
6 Appreciate it.

7 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Commissioners, any
8 questions?

9 [No response]

10 Thank you, Mr. Keller.

11 [Witness excused]

12 MR. MINGES: James Ballard, are you here this
13 evening?

14 [No response]

15 [Witness affirmed]

16 THEREUPON came,

17 L E W I S K E A S L E R ,

18 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

19 WITNESS: I'm Lewis Keasler. I'm a local
20 Anderson County farmer. I live at 225 Country
21 Meadows.

22 And I want to say that I'm working-class
23 people, just like all these people are.

24 VOICE: That's right.

25 [Applause]

1 WITNESS: The reason they're here – the reason
2 they're here is because we're at our limit. The
3 limit is we can't afford any more, and we can't do
4 any more.

5 I've got a son in Clemson University and I'm
6 the chairperson for the Anderson County Farmer's
7 Market board, and we've got farmers drying grain,
8 we've got farmers pumping water. And this price
9 increase is killing us. And, I mean, Duke Power
10 has already got a 7 percent pay increase, I think,
11 and they got another 7 they slipped in. And we
12 can't stand any more. I mean, everybody's at their
13 limit.

14 I eat breakfast with a lot of older guys.
15 They're on fixed income, and they need every dime
16 they can get now, to feed their families. And I'm
17 62 years old. And you need to hear this: I can't
18 retire because I can't afford to. It takes more
19 money now to keep everything going than it does
20 to – to live.

21 And Duke Power, Ms. Duke Power, let me say
22 this to you: We need, in Anderson County, some
23 representatives to talk to these people when they
24 got a problem. They don't need to go to Charlotte
25 to talk to somebody. We need somebody here.

[Applause]

And these representatives need to be somebody that can listen and say, "Hey, I'm having trouble with my power bill. What can you do to help me?" And we need help from Duke Power.

These people here are like me. We're making thousands, not millions, and that's the bottom line. And I hope the Public Service Commission sees the problem. We need help from you with Duke Power. Thank you.

[Applause]

CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, sir.

Questions from the parties of Mr. Keasler?

CROSS EXAMINATION

BY MR. NELSON:

Q Mr. Keasler, could I ask you a couple of questions?

A Sure. Go ahead.

Q So you're -- you're a farmer. Do you use electricity, both like for your farm business as well as your residence?

CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Come back to the microphone, please, so everybody can hear you, please, sir.

WITNESS: [Indicating.]

<

1 BY MR. NELSON:

2 Q You're running – you're running a bill both for the
3 farm, as well as for the house?

4 A Yes, sir. We run an 800-acre operation.

5 Q Uh-huh.

6 A We've got cattle, we got hogs, we've got produce. We
7 pump water. We dry grain. We do a little of
8 everything. You got to be diversified to live now.

9 Q I'm – I'm sure it's seasonal when you're running those
10 costs. But what – what's your bill run for the farm?

11 A Well, it's hard to say. We run a shop, we work on
12 equipment. We weld. It's different times, different
13 things. But it's – it's tough now. Our prices now
14 we're getting for farm commodities are what they got in
15 the '80s, and we've got fixed costs and fixed money.

16 MR. NELSON: Thank you, sir. I appreciate you
17 coming to testify.

18 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you. Commissioners,
19 any questions?

20 [No response]

21 Okay. Thank you. Thank you, sir.

22 MS. SMITH: Mr. Chairman?

23 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Yes, ma'am.

24 MS. SMITH: I'm so sorry. I couldn't quite
25 get my mic on.

1 Mr. – Mr. Keasler, and I don't mean to make
2 you stand up again, but if you would be willing to
3 talk to Mr. Marcus Preston about your desire to
4 have a representative contact in the area, I
5 believe that we could help you if you're willing to
6 speak with Mr. Preston.

7 WITNESS: We want it for everybody, not just
8 me.

9 [Applause]

10 MS. SMITH: Yes, sir.

11 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Mr. Keasler, if you would
12 talk to Mr. Preston – he's right back there in the
13 white shirt. So if you could –

14 [Witness excused]

15 Okay. Ladies and gentlemen, we – when you do
16 a court proceeding like this, you have a court
17 reporter who has to repeat every word that's said
18 in this, so it goes into the record, and we're
19 going to give Ms. Jo Wheat, our court reporter, a
20 little break so she can stop talking for a few
21 minutes, and then we'll resume in about five to ten
22 minutes. Thank you.

23 [WHEREUPON, a recess was taken from 7:18
24 to 7:26 p.m.]

25 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Ladies and gentlemen, if we

1 could get everybody to take their seats, we would
2 like to get started again. Thank you. If we could
3 get everybody to sit down and we can have order, we
4 will continue.

5 MR. MINGES: Mr. Chairman, the next witness on
6 our list is Leonard Weblein_[sic], and Lon_[sic] Monroe,
7 you're after – you're next.

8 [Witness affirmed]

9 THEREUPON came,

10 L E O N A R D L I E B L E I N ,
11 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

12 WITNESS: My name is Leonard Lieblein, and I
13 live at 115 McAlister Road, Williamston, South
14 Carolina.

15 I purchased my home in Williamston a little
16 over 40 years ago. When I moved there, we enjoyed
17 some of the best electric rates in the country.
18 Duke Power service was second to none. At that
19 time, there were small satellite stations that had
20 crews to address the needs of the customers. When
21 you had a problem, it was addressed quickly and
22 correctly.

23 Since that time, Duke Power and later Duke
24 Energy has closed these locations and gone mostly
25 to contractors to address their service

1 requirements. I'm sure this was done as a cost-
2 containment measure, but the result has been poor
3 customer service and inefficiency. I will give you
4 several of our experiences in this area.

5 A couple of years ago, a tropical storm came
6 through, downing trees. A rental home I own in
7 Belton had a tree drop across the main powerline.
8 The powerline was still active. An Asplundh crew
9 and an out-of-state electrical service crew were
10 dispatched to repair the problem. A Duke
11 supervisor came out to survey the site. Both
12 crews, about 12 men, had to wait several hours for
13 the line to be turned off. After removing the
14 tree, it was dark and the service crew decided to
15 return the next morning. This resulted in
16 everything in my tenant's chest freezer and
17 refrigerator being lost. I imagine others in the
18 subdivision had the same losses.

19 One would assume that the recent changes over
20 to smart meters was a saving in operational cost
21 for Duke Energy due to the removal of a meter-
22 reading contractor. However, during this process I
23 saw events that left me with questions. I have a
24 three-phase service at my Williamston home. When
25 the first Grid One Solutions worker arrived, they

1 did not have the proper meter. I believe the
2 second visit was from a contractor out of Sumter.
3 They advised me that the meter base on the side of
4 the house was manufactured by Anchor and had a
5 defect which prevented them from making the change.
6 Apparently, the bypass switch on the base could
7 possibly short phase to phase. As I understand, a
8 worker in Florida was injured when this happened.

9 I knew for a fact the switch on my meter base
10 was damaged. It failed when Duke Power replaced
11 the transformer feeding the house during the time
12 when Duke Power owned and maintained the meter
13 bases. It was never repaired by them. During the
14 smart meter changeover, there were a total of about
15 six visits. Grid One Solutions even came out to
16 attempt a replacement, until I informed them the
17 meter base was defective. It took numerous phone
18 calls to Duke Energy to get this corrected.

19 The last two contractors' visits were done
20 without any notifications. The smart meter was
21 actually installed without the meter base being
22 replaced. I became aware of this when I walked by
23 the meter and noticed an extreme low reading.
24 After calling Duke Energy, they finally got a
25 contractor to replace the base. They arrived

1 unannounced on a day that I had an appointment to
2 go to. I was only able to watch part of the
3 replacement, during which I saw a contractor using
4 a power reciprocating saw to cut through the
5 conduit below the meter base.

6 I was not able to stay to see if the wires
7 below the meter were damaged by what was not an –
8 [3-minute alarm]

9 – appropriate means to make a repair. If the
10 electrician that made this repair had worked for
11 me, I would've terminated his employment on the
12 spot.

13 A number of years ago, I needed power run to a
14 house. I have a farm in Greenville County. I had
15 a septic system installed, only we left the line
16 from the tank to the field exposed so the
17 underground crew would be able to trench on both
18 sides of the line and pass underneath the pipe.

19 About a month after moving into the house, my
20 septic system stopped functioning. I had the
21 septic tank contractor come out. He dug up both
22 sides of where the power had been trenched. The
23 pipe contractor had trenched through the septic
24 line, installed the powerline, and covered
25 everything up. When the empty 1500-gallon septic

1 tank filled, the system backed up.

2 The service at the farm also has a three-phase
3 power delivery. A few years ago, when the meter
4 needed to be changed, a contractor for Duke changed
5 it out to a single-phase meter. Fortunately, I did
6 not have a loss due to the error.

7 In addition to the above, I've had Duke
8 contractors leave my property unsecured numerous
9 times, lock me out of my own property by bypassing
10 my lock and cut my chain when they were supposed to
11 call to gain entry as listed on my account.

12 Honestly, I do not see where contractors for
13 Duke have been a benefit. I see people who do not
14 care about what they're doing and I see poor
15 communications between Duke and their contractors,
16 resulting in inefficient operations.

17 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Mr. Lieblein.

18 WITNESS: Over the past few years, all I see
19 are rate-increase notifications. To me, this
20 service increase is ridiculous. I see it adversely
21 affecting those with low incomes and on fixed
22 incomes, plus agricultural interests as well. We
23 use meters just for pumping water. It is time for
24 this commission to send Duke Energy a message by
25 denying this increase.

1 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Mr. Lieblein, thank you.
2 You – you – your three minutes – but we'll take –
3 if you've got your –

4 WITNESS: I've got one more sentence.

5 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Okay. Go for it.

6 WITNESS: Duke Energy needs to increase their
7 efficiency and the quality of their customer
8 service. They should not be allowed to make their
9 customers pay for their inefficient operations.

10 [Applause]

11 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you.

12 Questions from the parties? Mr. Nelson.

13 MR. NELSON: Thank you for testifying, sir,
14 and I want to tell you, as well as everybody else
15 here, apparently, I kept saying that we're on the
16 second floor, with the ORS. We're actually – we're
17 one floor down. Yeah. This is the second floor.
18 So we're on the next floor down, which apparently
19 is the first floor. I guess I came in the
20 basement.

21 So we have our consumer services people there.
22 And a lot of people aren't aware that if you're
23 having issues with something like this, with the
24 company, if you need to report it to somebody,
25 we're happy to take complaints like that. And if

1 you could get some information from our desk, the
2 next level down, we'd be happy to give that to you.
3 So maybe the next time you can call us –

4 WITNESS: I spend more time on the phone with
5 your customer service people in Charlotte than –

6 MR. NELSON: No. No. This – I – I am with
7 the Office of Regulatory Staff.

8 WITNESS: Oh, I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

9 MR. NELSON: I'm not with Duke Energy –

10 WITNESS: Okay.

11 MR. NELSON: So ORS customers' – Consumer
12 Services Division. is what I'm talking about. So,
13 we – again, that's a way to let you bypass trying
14 to deal with the company. You can call us. We
15 contact the company and try and get things fixed
16 for you.

17 WITNESS: Thank you.

18 MR. NELSON: Thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you.

20 Commissioners, any questions?

21 [No response]

22 Thank you, sir. Appreciate it.

23 [Witness excused]

24 MR. MINGES: Lon_[sic] Monroe, if you'd please
25 come forward? And Ron Sporrer, you're after Mr.

1 Monroe.

2 [Brief pause]

3 Mr. Monroe, are you here?

4 [No response]

5 Okay. Ron Sporrer? Would you please – oh.

6 MR. SPORRER: I'm here.

7 [Witness affirmed]

8 THEREUPON came,

9 R O N S P O R R E R ,

10 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

11 WITNESS: My name is Ron Sporrer. I live – my
12 wife and I live at 123 Upper View Terrace here in
13 Anderson.

14 And I – I've run businesses in the past. I
15 actually own a business and manage it, as well. I
16 understand at times a price increase may be
17 necessary. We try and avoid it, but it – it
18 sometimes is necessary. So I'm not here to – and
19 I'm not knowledgeable enough about the background
20 of all of that to say whether or not it's justified
21 or not, but I'd like to say that taking the base
22 rate up to a level where it's over 300 percent of
23 what it currently is seems like an incredibly high
24 increase all in one year.

25 I think that what I'd really like to draw

1 attention to is two things about the way it's
2 structured, because it seems like it's not
3 structured in a fair way.

4 First point is related to the fact that it
5 seems to be anti-green; and number two, it seems
6 like it unfairly burdens the lower-income families
7 in – in our State.

8 To talk a little bit about the first point, I
9 consider my wife and I to be fairly pro-green.
10 We've done – we've taken steps in our home to
11 improve the insulation, put in LED light bulbs, and
12 a number of other changes to make sure that our –
13 our home is as efficient as possible. I even get a
14 little bit of grief from my wife because I asked
15 her to turn the hot water heater on before she's
16 going to take a shower. We each take a shower and
17 then we turn it back off. So it's not, you know,
18 keeping – we're not keeping the water hot and
19 losing all that temperature when we're not around
20 or we're not using it. So we're going to those
21 kinds of levels to improve our efficiency in the
22 way we are pro-green and not wasting energy.

23 And that's – that's worked. We've actually
24 reduced our bill to where our bill is typically
25 less than half of what the typical bill is,

1 according to the letter we get from Duke every
2 month.

3 But the way that the rate increase is
4 structured, the people that are using a lot of
5 electricity don't really pay a burden. It's really
6 the people that are conserving, like myself, that
7 now all of a sudden we're faced with triple the
8 baseline cost, so there's no reward for doing these
9 energy-conserving measures.

10 The second point is about the way it's
11 structured to where it seems like it's unfair to the
12 lower-income families. If a person lives in an
13 apartment or a small house, they maybe pay \$100 a
14 month; somebody that lives in a 5000-square-foot
15 home maybe pays \$400-\$500 a month. This rate
16 increase is only a 4-5 percent increase for the
17 large homeowner, but it's like a 20-some percent
18 increase for the person that's on a – in a lower-
19 income household. So it seems like it's just
20 structured backwards from what it should be, to be
21 fair.

22 Those are my points.

23 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Mr. Sporrer.

24 [Applause]

25 Questions from the parties.

1 MR. NELSON: No questions. Thank you for
2 testifying. Appreciate it.

3 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Commissioners?

4 [No response]

5 Thank you, Mr. Sporrer.

6 [Witness excused]

7 MR. MINGES: Cynthia Liddell, you're next.
8 Becky Lash, you're after Mr. – Ms. Liddell.

9 [Witness affirmed]

10 THEREUPON came,

11 C Y N T H I A L I D D E L L ,
12 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

13 WITNESS: I'm Cynthia Liddell. I reside at
14 255 – 254 Hales Drive, Anderson, South Carolina.
15 And I am a concerned consumer of Duke Energy.

16 And I think it is really preposterous, the rate
17 hike that you are asking for our – we, as your
18 customers. And with my being on a fixed income and
19 with a recent increase in my income, I don't see it,
20 really, and it's going to get a little less – a lot
21 less – with this increase.

22 And I am a single person. I'm in an apartment.
23 And with other medical bills, health issues, that I
24 am incurring as an older person, it's going to be –
25 it's pretty tough, as it is. And I try to pay my

1 bills on time, and so far I have been current with
2 Duke Power. But with an increase, I can't really
3 say. And with my bill being prorated each month, it
4 has been a blessing for me to stay current, and I
5 just wanted you to know that. And I have, as I have
6 heard other people mention, purchased the LED bulbs,
7 showerhead, and I can't remember what else, but it
8 did help but an increase won't help me much.

9 But I just wanted to let you know that it does
10 hurt us, as seniors, without any other income
11 besides the fixed income. I am on fixed income. So
12 I do thank you.

13 [Applause]

14 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, ma'am. Hang on.
15 Any questions from the parties?

16 [No response]

17 Thank you, ma'am.

18 [Witness excused]

19 MR. MINGES: Becky Lash, you're next.

20 Elizabeth Adams, you're after Ms. Lash.

21 [Witness affirmed]

22 THEREUPON came,

23 B E C K Y L A S H ,

24 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

25 WITNESS: My name is Becky Lash. Address is

1 4023 Whitehall Road, Anderson, South Carolina. The
2 ZIP is 29626.

3 I'm coming on behalf of a small business.
4 Also, I'm a resident, so I'm actually talking about
5 two points here. I currently operate a campground
6 and a small restaurant here in Anderson County.
7 Thereby, I'm addressing Duke Energy's proposed
8 increases related to general service rates and
9 residential rates.

10 But quickly, I'd like to address the
11 residential rates, since I do live in Anderson
12 County. The increase of the basic facilities charge
13 per month from the current \$8.29 to the proposed \$28
14 per month – I need my glasses [indicating] – I
15 believe is outrageous, and it's going to create a
16 significant hardship on so many families.

17 In addition, I went on the website and was
18 looking for Duke Energy's Application. It took me
19 quite a while to find it, but I did find it and
20 printed it out. That way, I was able to read it.

21 There's items in the Application, I believe,
22 that the general public doesn't even know about.
23 For example, Duke Energy's proposal is not only
24 requesting the rate change for the first year in the
25 kilowatt usage, but in the Application there's a

1 request for an increase to residential rates of
2 \$1.54 per month more beginning in June 2020, and a
3 \$1.92 per month beginning June 1st of 2021. This is
4 stated on page four, paragraph eight of the
5 Application.

6 I don't think a lot of people even know that.
7 As a general service account-holder, Duke Energy is
8 currently charging \$10.52 per month for the basic
9 facilities charge, and they're requesting a rate
10 hike up to \$29.69 per month. This is an increase of
11 \$19.17 per month for my business, and currently I
12 have 16 meters. That's an increase per month of
13 \$306.72 per month, right at the gate. Per year,
14 that's almost \$3700 a year for my business. This
15 isn't including the extra kilowatt usage if those
16 new rates go into effect.

17 So what is that going to do to me as a business
18 owner? I'm going to have to raise my rates to my
19 customers. I'm just a little mom-and-pop business.
20 I looked at – I'd ask that you look at the overall
21 picture of all businesses and residences that will
22 have their expenses increased. And my Duke utility
23 expense is my second major expense, the second
24 expenses the highest in my company per year. We're
25 not just talking about a few dollars; we're talking

1 about –

2 [3-minute alarm]

3 – quite a few dollars. And as businesses,
4 they're going to be having to up their rates, and
5 this is going to trickle down to the consumer. So
6 the residents are not only being hit by consumer
7 rates, their residential rates rising, but the
8 businesses will be having to up their rates, too,
9 and that's going to go home to them also.

10 [Applause]

11 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Ms. Lash.

12 Questions from the parties? Mr. Nelson.

13 CROSS EXAMINATION

14 BY MR. NELSON:

15 Q Ms. Lash, you said you've got – so, this is like a
16 campground that you operate.

17 A Correct.

18 Q Correct? So those 16 meters you're talking about, I take
19 it those are on the individual spaces at the campground?

20 A Correct, and cottages, and office building, too.

21 Q Right. So you're going to be paying this per meter, even
22 if you don't have anybody hooked up to that or staying
23 with you; is that correct?

24 A That's exactly right.

25 MR. NELSON: Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you.

2 Commissioners?

3 [No response]

4 Thank you, Ms. Lash.

5 [Witness excused]

6 MR. MINGES: Elizabeth Adams, would you please
7 come forward. Douglas McDonald, you're after Ms.
8 Adams.

9 [Witness affirmed]

10 THEREUPON came,

11 E L I Z A B E T H A D A M S , P h . D . ,
12 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

13 WITNESS: I'm Elizabeth Adams. 958 W. Branch
14 Avenue in Newry, South Carolina.

15 Yes, my name is Elizabeth Adams, and I'm a
16 college professor with a Ph.D. Yeah. Impressive,
17 right? And my mother addresses these letters to me
18 as Dr. Adams. She's really impressed. Sounds like I
19 might make a lot of money, but wait for the rest of
20 the story.

21 I'm a college professor, a part-time adjunct
22 college professor. I get paid for piecework: a
23 course here, a course there. And if I get four
24 courses a year, I make a grand total of \$20,000,
25 before taxes. So, when I heard the salary of the

1 CEO of Duke Power, I was flabbergasted. She is –
2 she, a woman – makes \$20 million a year. Twenty
3 million. Now I do not teach math, but by my
4 calculation that is 1000 times what I make. A
5 thousand times. Now, I'm sure she works a lot
6 harder than I do. And she's probably a lot smarter
7 than I am. But, hey, 1000 times smarter? I don't
8 think so.

9 So anyway, I live in the little village of
10 Newry. And if you don't know Newry, it's New-ree to
11 you outsiders; it's a little mill town, forgotten by
12 most people. And it's situated on the downhill side
13 of the giant dam that Duke maintains at Keowee-
14 Toxaway Nuclear Power Plant. That's right, we live
15 in the shadow of the dam.

16 So, by the good work of Duke's maintenance
17 crew, the dam is holding so far. They keep it mowed
18 and I check on that. We are so close to the nuclear
19 power plant that we think that Duke ought to just
20 toss an extension cord over the dam and give us our
21 electricity for free.

22 [Applause]

23 They're not going to do that. But Duke does
24 some good things. They sent me a link to a lesson
25 on dishwashing for energy conservation.

1 [Laughter]

2 They did. It started off with "Scrape the food
3 into the garbage." Well, I compost all my food
4 waste since we don't have trash pickup in Newry.
5 But it goes on to say, "Then put it into the
6 dishwasher and always run a full load." Well, I
7 live alone and my dishes do not comprise a full load
8 in a week, so – they said not to bother with
9 rinsing, so you can save energy. So those dirty
10 dishes are going to start to, you know – yeah – by
11 the time I get a full load. But wait a minute. I
12 don't have a dishwasher. I do not own a dishwasher.

13 Newry is a town of four people. I'm probably
14 one of the most gentrified people in that town, with
15 my pittance little salary. I don't think anybody in
16 Newry has a dishwasher. Duke seems to have the idea
17 that its entire constituency there is middle-class
18 and running dishwashers, but that's not true of the
19 residents.

20 [3-minute alarm]

21 Raising the rates would put an undue burden on
22 the poor. Where is the justice in this world of
23 gross inequality? Justice would have us move toward
24 greater equality, evening out the resources. We
25 should lead the world in this effort. Duke's

1 current push is moving us in the wrong direction.

2 Please, Duke, let's move forward toward
3 justice, even if it's just merely keeping the rates
4 where they are today. Thank you.

5 [Applause]

6 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Dr. Adams.

7 Are there questions from the parties?

8 MR. NELSON: I don't have any questions, but
9 thank you, Doctor. It's very much appreciated.

10 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Commissioners.

11 [No response]

12 Thank you, Dr. Adams.

13 [Witness excused]

14 MR. MINGES: Douglas McDonald, would you please
15 come forward? Karen Szubinski, you're next.

16 [Witness affirmed]

17 THEREUPON came,

18 D O U G L A S M c D O N A L D ,
19 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

20 WITNESS: Douglas McDonald, 104 Lyttleton Way,
21 Anderson, South Carolina 29621. I am a retiree;
22 myself and my wife are living on a fixed income, in
23 South Carolina.

24 One item that I'd like to address in the rate
25 increase is this: the embedded cost for the failed

1 nuclear plant that was implemented.

2 Why should the ratepayers be paying for a
3 failed business plan? If you make a mistake as a
4 business person, you would go back, normally, to the
5 boards who made the mistake and say, "You cough up
6 into this pot the difference." That doesn't seem to
7 be done anymore. So, I might throw it back at the
8 boards of directors who made these mistakes. Maybe
9 you should think about paying a little into this pot
10 rather than making us pay.

11 Thank you, very much.

12 [Applause]

13 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Mr. McDonald.
14 Questions from the parties?

15 MR. NELSON: No questions, sir.

16 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Commissioners.

17 [No response]

18 Thank you, sir.

19 [Witness excused]

20 MR. MINGES: Karen Szubinski, would you please
21 come forward? Timothy Porter, you're after Ms.
22 Szubinski.

23 [Brief pause]

24 Ms. Szubinski, are you here?

25 [No response]

1 Timothy Porter, would you please come forward.

2 [Witness affirmed]

3 THEREUPON came,

4 T I M O T H Y P O R T E R ,

5 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

6 WITNESS: Timothy Porter, 214 Bailey Street,
7 Anderson, South Carolina.

8 This whole thing boils down to the fact that
9 Duke Power has told so many different stories about
10 different things, okay, like my mother-in-law –
11 okay? Let's take her, for instance. Before they
12 put in them new meters –

13 VOICE: That's right.

14 WITNESS: – her bill was \$200-something a
15 month. Now her bill, after that new meter got put
16 in, the electronic one, \$759. Explain that one to
17 me. That's my first one.

18 Second, when we asked Duke about putting the
19 old meter back in, "We don't do that no more."
20 Well, it sure is funny, I looked online and found a
21 mandate stating that you have the right to get the
22 old meter put back in. Okay?

23 So I don't understand what all this whole rate
24 hike is about, or anything. You take everybody
25 living in South Carolina and put them all together,

1 \$20 a month is going to add up to over \$20-something
2 million. That's way too much. Okay? My mom – not
3 my mother-in-law – she lives on a fixed income of
4 under a thousand a month. Could y'all live off
5 that?

6 VOICE: No.

7 WITNESS: Well, I'm just asking. I mean,
8 honestly, pay for your prescriptions like she does?
9 She has to take heart medication, all these other
10 kind of medications. Can anybody really afford to
11 live off that?

12 VOICE: No.

13 WITNESS: Honestly. It's gonna put a burden on
14 the poor people. I'm in a – I'm in an environment
15 where I can pick a job that I want. I got a good
16 job, okay? I'm in a booming industry. But if you
17 ain't in the same industry I'm in, you work around
18 Anderson – my daughter, she works at a convenience
19 store. She makes \$475 every two weeks. Can anybody
20 survive off that, living on their own? No.

21 Duke Power is a monopoly, point and simple. I
22 worked for a company years ago – years ago – that
23 was gonna buy out another company in the same
24 industry almost, but use different materials. The
25 government stepped in and said, "No, you can't do

1 that. That would be a monopoly.” How can Duke
2 Energy get away with running a monopoly in the whole
3 United States, knowing the government can step in
4 and stop everybody else from buying what they want?

5 [Applause]

6 It’s a monopoly. It’s a big game. You make
7 \$20 million a year. Okay, take a look at me. I
8 make, maybe if I’m lucky, \$52,000 a year, in the
9 industry I’m in. And I’m happy with that. You
10 raise these rates, it’s gonna kill a lot of people.
11 It’s gonna hurt a lot of people. This coal ash
12 everybody’s talking about, yeah, I understand that.
13 Duke made a mistake. Pay for your mistake. If I
14 owned a house, I’m renting it to somebody, a tree
15 falls on the house? Can I charge them if the tree
16 falls on the house? No. I’m responsible.

17 Do the right thing. Don’t raise the rates.
18 That’s all I can say.

19 [Applause]

20 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Mr. Porter.
21 Parties, questions?

22 MR. NELSON: I have a question.

23 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Mr. Nelson.

24 <

25 <

CROSS EXAMINATION

BY MR. NELSON:

Q Mr. Porter, \$759 a month –

A I can show you the bill, if you want to see it tomorrow.

Q – that’s – so you’re saying that occurred after –

A After the new meters got put in, which all Duke Energy – you know what they said? “Aww, new meters are great. There ain’t nothing wrong with it.” We asked them, “Can you put the old meter back,” because we never had a problem with bills like that. “Well, we can’t do that.”

I got a paper in my back pocket that says the Commission voted: You can opt out of the new meters. You have the right to opt out of the new meter. So why would Duke lie to us, and tell us, “Aww, the new meters are great. You can’t go back to the old one”? I know, I called.

MR. NELSON: Thank you. Appreciate it. And if I could say, because of this issue about going back to the meter and that, if you could talk to, next floor down, my consumer services people at the Office of Regulatory Staff, I’d appreciate it, to see if we can do anything for you, okay?

WITNESS: All right. Thank you.

[Applause]

CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Mr. Porter.

1 [Witness excused]

2 MR. MINGES: Hallie Henderson, if you would
3 come forward? Hallie Henderson? Tom Glenn, you're
4 after Ms. Henderson.

5 Hallie Henderson, are you here?

6 [No response]

7 Tom Glenn, are you here? Would you please come
8 forward. Debra Coleman, you're after Mr. Glenn.

9 [Witness affirmed]

10 THEREUPON came,

11 T O M G L E N N ,

12 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

13 WITNESS: Good evening. My name is Tom Glenn.
14 I live at 105 Wood Duck Road, Anderson, South
15 Carolina. And I appreciate y'all letting us come
16 and talk to you tonight.

17 First, I want to say I'm a Duke retiree. I
18 worked 42 years for Duke at Oconee Nuclear Station.
19 And I want to just throw in a comment about Oconee.
20 If ever Duke made a beautiful, fantastic investment,
21 it was Oconee. It has run 40 – well, since 1973.
22 It runs full power, 24 hours a day, seven days a
23 week, and is the – it is clean power, no carbon
24 dioxide. So anyway, just wanted to mention that.

25 Also, a lot of people have problems with their

1 power bills. I want to say I live in a 2500-square-
2 foot house, more or less. Two dogs, a cat, a wife,
3 and me, and I think our power bill is \$144 a month,
4 and that's on the equal payment plan. So 11 months
5 out of the year, we pay \$144. Last year, it
6 might've been \$156. It kind of moves around. So,
7 that's a terrific program.

8 But, anyway, what I wanted to talk about: I'm
9 not particularly pro or con the rate increase, but I
10 want to mention that one of the programs that Duke
11 does is the grid modernization. And it's a great
12 program. What I'd like to see happen with that is –
13 in my little corner of Anderson County, when we have
14 a power outage, about 900 homes are left without
15 power due to the way things are routed. With grid
16 modernization, I think there's probably ways they
17 can use the automatic switching to maybe reroute
18 that to another powerline. I think a lot of people
19 would appreciate that, as we have more and more
20 power outages. I think, as much as Duke can put
21 into ways of rerouting power would be a great thing.
22 I think a lot of people would appreciate that,
23 because, of course, outages last longer due to
24 weather, trees, getting people here.

25 The other thing I wanted to mention also is

1 there's a lot of talk about net metering with solar
2 energy. It concerns me that, if you're paying –
3 like I am – 10 cents a kilowatt-hour, and you're
4 getting paid back 10 cents a kilowatt-hour for
5 solar, that's \$100 a megawatt-hour. I think any
6 company, any group that wanted to criticize Duke,
7 would say, "You're buying power for 100 megawatts –
8 \$100 a megawatt-hour?" They'd say, "No way, you're
9 crazy." Needless to say, Duke provides – gets power
10 from Oconee for much cheaper than \$100 a megawatt-
11 hour.

12 So it just seems to me like that means all us
13 customers are stuck with paying –

14 [3-minute alarm]

15 – that much more for power that comes from
16 solar, solar residential installations.

17 That's it. Thank you.

18 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Mr. Glenn.

19 Questions from the parties? Mr. Nelson.

20 CROSS EXAMINATION

21 BY MR. NELSON:

22 Q Mr. Glenn, the 900 homes you're talking about, is that
23 part of where you live? I mean, is that your
24 neighborhood, where the power goes out like that?

25 A Several neighborhoods.

1 Q Okay. Several neighborhoods. So, assuming now that if
2 Duke goes ahead and gets this grid modernization plan
3 moving forward, how much more a month do you think you'd
4 be willing to pay to get that increase in service?

5 A Improved –

6 Q Yeah, I mean, is it worth \$1 a month? Is it worth –

7 A Sure.

8 Q – \$10 a month? Do you have a limit on how much you'd be
9 willing to pay to increase that?

10 A I hadn't thought about it. It's a great question. I
11 don't know. If I knew that the power would stay out less
12 than, typically, you know, less than an hour or so, I'd
13 say that's probably worth five bucks a month, to know
14 that. But, you know, that would be hard to do. I mean,
15 I don't know that Duke could do that. But I think a lot
16 of people would really appreciate not having to worry
17 whether their power is going to go out tomorrow or the
18 next day or the day after, if they could reroute the
19 power better.

20 Q Okay. Thank you, sir. I appreciate your testimony.

21 A Thank you.

22 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you. Commissioners?

23 [No response]

24 Thank you.

25 WITNESS: Thank you.

1 COMMISSIONER WHITFIELD: Mr. Chairman.

2 Mr. Glenn –

3 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Mr. Glenn, Commissioner
4 Whitfield will ask you a question.

5 WITNESS: Yes, sir.

6 EXAMINATION

7 BY COMMISSIONER WHITFIELD:

8 Q I do have a question for you. I want to follow up a
9 little bit, where Mr. Nelson was going. You said you
10 were a 42-year employee?

11 A Yes.

12 Q Were you there with the modernization of bringing Oconee
13 Plant, you referred to, into the digital compliance?

14 A Yes.

15 Q When did you retire?

16 A In 2015. I was heavily involved in when we digitized the
17 integrated control system, which basically runs the
18 plant.

19 Q And so, obviously, you've got a lot of familiarity with
20 that plant, as you mentioned, but what Mr. Nelson was
21 saying, if you – I think you said earlier – I'm trying to
22 my arms around if you're really for or against. You said
23 at the beginning you didn't really have a – you weren't a
24 pro or con, but you sound like to me you're telling Mr.
25 Nelson, if these grid modernization efforts were in place

1 and improved some of the outages and some of the other
2 things, as it pertains to the net metering costs and some
3 of those things, that you might be for a small increase.
4 Are you against, or where do you stand in this?

5 A I'm in favor of paying for improvements to our grid, so
6 that we can, you know, have better power, so I don't have
7 to have a natural gas generator outside, in case I'm
8 worried about losing power. You know, I spent 8000 bucks
9 on a natural gas generator. But I'd be willing to pay
10 more to know that, you know, the power's going to stay on
11 pretty well, and not – and not stay off for a day or half
12 a day or two days at the time.

13 Q One last question. How long have you been on the
14 levelized billing plan?

15 A Probably 20 years.

16 Q So even when you were an employee, you are on that.

17 A Oh, yes.

18 Q Not something you did recently.

19 A No. I've been on that for 20 years. I've lived in this
20 house since '82. It was built in '78. And I guess it's
21 decently insulated.

22 COMMISSIONER WHITFIELD: Yes, sir. Thank you.

23 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

24 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Mr. Glenn.

25 [Witness excused]

1 MR. MINGES: Ms. Coleman? And Barbara
2 Barhaim_[sic], Barham, you're after Ms. Coleman.

3 <

4 [Witness affirmed]

5 THEREUPON came,

6 D E B R A C O L E M A N ,
7 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

8 WITNESS: my name is Debra Coleman. I live at
9 103 Furman Avenue, in Greenwood, South Carolina.

10 I'm a retired educator. I moved here from
11 Texas in 2017. I'm currently Secretary at the local
12 AARP Chapter 4218 in Greenville, South Carolina. We
13 have members in our chapter that are from the cities
14 of Greenwood, Hodges, and Ninety-Six. Several of my
15 colleagues and I drove here over 45 miles, to be
16 here, because we want our voices heard.

17 Duke Energy supplies the power for people in
18 these cities, as well as the county – the entire
19 county – of Greenwood. Many seniors in our
20 community are on a fixed income and are struggling
21 to keep a roof over their head, food on their table,
22 pay for their healthcare costs, and then have to pay
23 for their energy bills. A rate increase would have
24 an adverse effect on their monthly budget.

25 There is no consideration or special rate for

1 seniors that struggle month-to-month to pay their
2 bills, many of whom are living at or below the
3 poverty level.

4 On behalf of my colleagues and I, and the
5 citizens of Greenwood, Hodges, and Ninety-Six, we
6 ask that the Public Service Commissioners of South
7 Carolina ask Duke Energy to reconsider the rate hike
8 and possibly lower it. And if that's not possible,
9 then have a special rate for seniors that can prove
10 that they do not have the extra income to afford a
11 rate hike.

12 How about asking the top executives at Duke to
13 not get a pay raise this year, or next? Just a
14 question.

15 [Applause]

16 Thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Ms. Coleman.

18 Questions from the parties?

19 MR. NELSON: No questions. Thank you, Ms.
20 Coleman, for coming and testifying.

21 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Commissioners?

22 [No response]

23 Thank you, ma'am.

24 WITNESS: Thank you.

25 [Witness excused]

1 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Barbara Barham? Rodger
2 Chapman, you are after – you're next

3 [Witness affirmed]

4 THEREUPON came,

5 B A R B A R A B A R H A M ,
6 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

7 WITNESS: I'm Barbara Barham. I live at 109
8 Julia Circle, in Anderson, 29625.

9 I'm a nurse. I'm mostly retired, get paid for
10 a little bit of work I do at this point, but I do a
11 lot of volunteer work with a number of different
12 groups over the years.

13 That volunteer work puts me in touch with
14 people in crisis. And what I see over and over
15 again are some of our people who I work with in
16 crisis are tremendously poor. And Anderson County
17 has a tremendous amount of poverty.

18 I've worked with a lot of people who very
19 clearly have to watch their electricity bills
20 because they have trouble paying them. People who
21 have to choose: Do I feed my kids appropriate food?
22 Do I get my medicines? Am I able to go to the
23 doctor? Or do I pay all my bills?

24 Believe it or not, I've worked with people who
25 actually have lived in homes without power because

1 they couldn't afford the bill. And once they got
2 behind, the charges kept increasing.

3 This hits poor families, families with kids,
4 older people, disabled people, in a way that I don't
5 think most of you can measure. I've been in lots of
6 houses like this and I've worked with families who,
7 in the middle of the summer, even though they've got
8 disabilities, have to not use the air conditioning
9 in their apartment because they can't pay the bill –
10 they can't pay the bill. And it's not as uncommon
11 as most people would think.

12 So I ask you, please, refuse this. Thank you.

13 [Applause]

14 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Ms. Barham. Hang
15 on one second.

16 Questions from the parties?

17 [No response]

18 Commissioners?

19 [No response]

20 Thank you, ma'am.

21 [Witness excused]

22 MR. MINGES: Rodger Chapman, would you please
23 come forward? And David Hamilton, you're after Mr.
24 Chapman.

25 [Witness affirmed]

1 THEREUPON came,

2 R O D G E R C H A P M A N ,

3 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

4 WITNESS: Rodger Chapman. 7 Day Beacon Court,
5 in Salem, South Carolina 29676.

6 Thank you for being here and listening to our
7 concerns. I'm here to speak on behalf of myself and
8 those who will be adversely affected by the Duke
9 Energy rate hike. I have several comments followed
10 by a couple of questions I hope to have answered.

11 This energy rate hike is a bid to increase
12 company revenue in South Carolina. It's a bad
13 energy policy, hurting low-income users, the
14 elderly, and discouraging energy conservation, which
15 is always important for our nation and the world.
16 Those of us trying to conserve precious energy
17 resources are penalized by this eye-popping increase
18 in basic facility charge, a monthly fee built into
19 our bill from Duke Energy.

20 We shouldn't roll over and play dead on this
21 issue, my fellow citizens.

22 VOICE: That's right.

23 WITNESS: The billing increase, if approved,
24 would be \$82 million shared among all residential
25 customers. Low energy users will realize the

1 largest rate increase on their bill. This large of
2 a basic facility charge has never been seen before.
3 It would be the highest in the nation among publicly
4 traded power companies.

5 The overall rate increase proposed only
6 slightly reduces the per kilowatt-hour usage rate.
7 All household power bills would see an increase to
8 some degree, but the smallest users – those who use
9 less power and those most energy-efficient – would
10 see the most overall increase in their monthly basic
11 facilities charge. The state's average of users of,
12 for example, 1100 kilowatt-hours of power, would see
13 a 12 percent bill increase. The higher users of
14 power – say, 2000 kilowatt-hours – will only see an
15 increase of 6 percent on their bill. That doesn't
16 make any sense to me, as a consumer, or anyone in
17 this room, I'm sure.

18 The entire increase in the basic facilities fee
19 charge, why not put some of the increased charge in
20 the per kilowatt-hour used? If not, attempts to
21 conserve and be more energy efficient is thwarted
22 because the increase is all in the basic facilities
23 charge.

24 Now my questions: Do you have the rate
25 application for us to review, explaining why Duke

1 Energy needs the additional revenue? And, finally,
2 how do you suggest we use Duke's energy then –
3 power, then, to keep our bill and our budgets
4 reasonably in line, going forward?

5 Thank you.

6 [Applause]

7 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Mr. Chapman. I'd
8 encourage you to talk with the Office of Regulatory
9 Staff to get that information that you want.

10 Questions from the parties?

11 MR. NELSON: Just to follow up on what he said,
12 Mr. Chairman.

13 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Sure.

14 MR. NELSON: Mr. Chapman, we can get you the
15 right information to get you online. If you have
16 access to a computer, all this information is on
17 file with the docket management system on the Public
18 Service Commission's website. All that is publicly
19 available, and we can give you the information to
20 get there, so you can read it, sir.

21 WITNESS: Thank you. Is that on the second
22 floor?

23 MR. NELSON: Yeah, I guess the –

24 WITNESS: One floor down.

25 MR. NELSON: One floor down.

1 COMMISSIONER BELSER: Mr. Chairman?

2 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Commissioner Belser.

3 COMMISSIONER BELSER: The website that Mr.
4 Nelson is referring to is PSC – for Public Service
5 Commission – psc.sc – for South Carolina – .gov.
6 And I believe when you look at the website on the
7 homepage, I’m not sure that where all the filings
8 are made is called docket management system. It may
9 be abbreviated “DMS.” And then, if you’ve got the
10 notice, you put in the docket number, the 2018- –
11 what? – -319-E, and you’ll see all the filings. It
12 goes back – the earliest one will be the company’s
13 letter of intent. Probably the next few will be the
14 company’s Application and their prefiled testimony
15 that they file at the time they file the
16 Application. And you’ll see testimony that the
17 Office of Regulatory Staff has filed, as well as
18 other Intervenors in the case. So it’s all on
19 there, on the website. Sometimes it just takes a
20 while to download. Some of the files are pretty
21 big. It’s a lot of information. I hope that’ll
22 help.

23 WITNESS: Thank you for that information.

24 Thank you.

25 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you. Thank you, Mr.

1 Chapman.

2 [Applause]

3 [Witness excused]

4 MR. MINGES: David Hamilton, would you please
5 come forward? Richard Russell, you're after Mr.
6 Hamilton.

7 David Hamilton, are you here?

8 [No response]

9 Richard Russell, would you please come forward?
10 Luther Holmes, you're after Mr. Russell.

11 [Witness affirmed]

12 THEREUPON came,

13 R I C H A R D R U S S E L L ,
14 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

15 WITNESS: Richard Russell. 334 Bowlan Road,
16 Belton, South Carolina 29627.

17 I kind of took a different route on this. I
18 would like to thank Duke Energy for contributing to
19 all these outfits in our district, here, but any CPA
20 will tell you that that's deductible. All right?
21 That's deductible.

22 I took a different route. I found an article
23 in — of March 2018, written by Dion Roberts, and it
24 was in the *Charlotte Observer*. And I'm just going
25 to hit a couple of these comments in here, and I

1 would like to pass the rest of the whole sheet on to
2 the Commission.

3 "Duke Energy CEO Lynn Good made \$21.4 million
4 last year, an increase of 55 percent from the year
5 before and her highest ever as chief executive,
6 according to the company's proxy filing released
7 Friday."

8 "In 2017, Good's compensation was 175 times
9 more than the median compensation of approximately
10 \$122,000 for other employees."

11 And I'm jumping paragraphs here. "The higher
12 compensation comes as Duke is seeking to raise
13 customer bills across North Carolina, in part for
14 its expensive coal ash cleanup but also to cover
15 investments in its energy grid."

16 And I know that – I know everyone probably
17 understands that these new meters that are in,
18 they're read by satellite. So, when that went away,
19 the old meter, I would assume that they lost a lot
20 of personnel through attrition or layoffs or
21 firings. And so, anyway, the other part of this
22 report that I found was: Chief Financial Officer and
23 Executive Vice President, his salary was \$625,000;
24 his total compensation package was \$3.24 million.

25 Executive VP of Executive Affairs, Chief Legal

1 Officer and Corporate Secretary: Salary, \$521,000;
2 with his total compensation package, \$3.43 million.

3 Chief Operating Officer, Executive Vice
4 President: Salary, \$738k –

5 [3-minute alarm]

6 – with a total compensation of \$4.95 million.

7 And I'd like this to go into the record.

8 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you. We'll get that.

9 Questions for Mr. Russell?

10 MR. NELSON: No questions. Thank you, Mr.
11 Russell for coming out.

12 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Commissioners?

13 [No response]

14 Thank you, sir.

15 [Applause]

16 MR. MINGES: And that's Exhibit No. 5.

17 [WHEREUPON, Hearing Exhibit No. 5 was
18 marked and received in evidence.]

19 [Witness excused]

20 MR. MINGES: Luther Holmes, would you please
21 come forward? Mr. Holmes, are you here?

22 [No response]

23 Terry Morgan, would you please come forward.
24 Catherine Watt, you're after Mr. Morgan.

25 [Witness affirmed]

1 THEREUPON came,

2 T E R R Y M O R G A N ,

3 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

4 WITNESS: Terry Morgan. 334 Garren Road,
5 Belton, South Carolina 29627.

6 I think we've heard a lot of objective evidence
7 tonight, where most of the people in this room are
8 not in favor of this rate increase, and I am also
9 one of those. I've lived in this county just about
10 all of my life – and that's a few years, if you will
11 look at me now. I live probably a couple of miles
12 from the Lee Steam Station, right outside of
13 Williamston in Belton, there.

14 A few years ago, we were asked to attend, or
15 the community was asked to attend a meeting with
16 Duke Power concerning their plans for the Lee Steam
17 Station. In this meeting, they informed us then
18 that they had plans to shutter the coal-fired plant.
19 They also told us they were going to build a gas
20 plant there that would basically supply enough
21 electricity to basically power as much as one
22 reactor at the Oconee Station. They told us, also,
23 at this same time they were coming to clean up the
24 ash pit there. And, you know, since I lived in that
25 area most of my life, and very close to the river –

1 and I own property on the river there – I questioned
2 the people from Duke Power there, I said, “Well, why
3 are you moving this ash that’s been there for years,
4 and it even has trees growing up on it now, and it
5 looks very environmentally safe?” And they told me
6 at the time that, you know, it really wasn’t a
7 carcinogenic material; they just were being,
8 basically, the way I understood it, required by the
9 State to move it out of there and put it into a
10 lined landfill.

11 So I think they invested – at least, the
12 company that hauled the stuff, they had – I think
13 they bought 20 brand-new tractor-trailers
14 specifically to haul the stuff to Georgia and put it
15 into a lined landfill. They also told us they were
16 going to invest in a landfill there, because it was
17 going to take probably two years of hauling, you
18 know, 40 loads of this contaminated – or, this ash
19 to Georgia to dump it in the ground over there.

20 So it seemed strange to me, so I asked the
21 question, I said, “Well, so how much of this is the
22 consumer of your power going to cost?” And they
23 assured me at that time that none of that cost would
24 be passed on to any of their customers. And now,
25 less than a few years from that, we’re getting hit

1 with all the cost of it at one time. And I don't
2 believe that's correct. Now, the gentleman just a
3 few minutes ago said that the newspaper article said
4 that was the big reason why they needed this money,
5 was to cover that –

6 [3-minute alarm]

7 – kind of cost. And I don't think that's
8 right, for the citizens of the State of South
9 Carolina to pay for this.

10 And that's all I have. Thank you.

11 [Applause]

12 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Mr. Morgan.

13 Questions, anyone?

14 MR. NELSON: Thank you, Mr. Morgan.

15 WITNESS: Thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you.

17 [Witness excused]

18 MR. MINGES: Catherine Watt, would you please
19 come forward? Patricia_[sic] Davis, you're after Ms.
20 Watt.

21 Ms. Watt, are you here?

22 [No response]

23 Patricia_[sic] Davis, please come forward. Orlyn
24 Beauchamp?

25 MS. DAVIS: I surrender my time.

1 MR. MINGES: Oh, okay. Angela Burns, would you
2 please come forward.

3 [No response]

4 Robert Watson?

5 MR. WATSON: I put down, no, I didn't want to
6 speak.

7 MR. MINGES: Okay, that's fine. Scott Finley.

8 MR. FINLEY: Me.

9 MR. MINGES: Come forward, Mr. Finley.

10 [Witness affirmed]

11 THEREUPON came,

12 S C O T T F I N L E Y ,

13 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

14 WITNESS: My name is Scott Finley. 206
15 Beauregard Avenue, Anderson, 29625.

16 I just want to follow up on the service that's
17 provided and just my own personal account. I
18 tried – we had an electrical light out in front of
19 our house, which gave good light, made the house
20 feel safer. You could walk out. I could walk my
21 dog with the light there. Well, it took me four
22 phone calls and I talked to different people trying
23 to get the light back on. And after a year and a
24 half, a neighbor wanted to do something. He went to
25 a city councilman and the city councilman got stuff

1 done.

2 And it just seems that that kind of requirement
3 that we have to go through officials like that, to
4 get work done, isn't right. They need to do
5 something better.

6 So I just wanted to follow up on that. Thank
7 you.

8 [Applause]

9 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, sir.

10 Any questions from the parties?

11 MR. NELSON: Mr. Finley, again, when problems
12 like this happen – and I know people don't know a
13 lot about us. But we have a Consumer Services
14 Division at our agency, and part of what we try and
15 do is help folks like yourself when you have issues
16 like that. So if you could stop by, on the way
17 down, or get my card before I leave tonight, and so
18 that you've got a point of contact so if something
19 like this happens again, you have somebody else you
20 can call.

21 WITNESS: Well, I found the city councilman did
22 a good job.

23 MR. NELSON: That sounds like that worked, too.

24 [Laughter]

25 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Mr. Finley.

1 MR. NELSON: But it shouldn't take a year and a
2 half.

3 COMMISSIONER BELSER: Mr. Finley? Mr. Finley.

4 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Commissioner Belser.

5 EXAMINATION

6 BY COMMISSIONER BELSER:

7 Q Up here. Was that light in your yard or was it a
8 streetlight?

9 A It was a streetlight, and it was – the pole was across
10 the street, and –

11 Q Okay. But it was in front of your house.

12 A It's right in front of the house.

13 Q And tell me your town again?

14 A Anderson.

15 Q Anderson. Okay. Thank you, very much.

16 A On Beauregard.

17 [Witness excused]

18 MR. MINGES: Randy Smith, would you come up?

19 [No response]

20 Basil Karlow? Brenda Trimboli, you're after
21 Mr. Karlow.

22 [Witness affirmed]

23 THEREUPON came,

24 B A S I L K A R L O W ,
25 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

1 WITNESS: my name is Basil Karlow. I live at
2 1102 Cobbs Glen Drive, here in Anderson, South
3 Carolina.

4 I came here, after other stories; mine is very
5 minor, but I had experienced an inefficiency, and
6 when I heard of the rate increase, I was furious.
7 About two months ago, they were upgrading the wiring
8 system that's inground in my neighborhood, and there
9 were about six to probably ten people, three trucks,
10 a trailer with a huge roll of cable, and they worked
11 there for a week, doing nothing. Absolutely
12 nothing. They were around. They had the
13 telephones. They were eating lunch. And then they
14 were going home. Doing nothing.

15 Finally, I took the number from one of the
16 trucks and I called. It was a subcontractor. A
17 supervisor called me back, and he said the reason
18 that they were not doing anything, they were waiting
19 for Duke Power to come and mark where the powerlines
20 and the waterlines and the cable lines and all that
21 kind of stuff that were in there. This is a
22 tremendous inefficiency.

23 I'm an engineer. I work for industry. I've
24 never seen anything like this.

25 When I heard the rate increase, you know,

1 there's no question, Duke Power is a monopoly.
2 They're not operating efficiently. And I hear the
3 salaries of executives? Come on.

4 That's it.

5 [Applause]

6 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you.

7 Any questions of the parties?

8 MR. NELSON: Thank you, sir.

9 WITNESS: Sure.

10 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, sir.

11 [Witness excused]

12 MR. MINGES: Brenda Trimboli, please come
13 forward.

14 [No response]

15 Anne Graffunder?

16 [Witness affirmed]

17 THEREUPON came,

18 A N N E G R A F F U N D E R ,
19 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

20 WITNESS: My name is Anne Graffunder and I live
21 at 150 Oak Ridge Place, in Greenville, 29615.

22 I had to come here instead of going there
23 because I have a 15-year-old son that I have to
24 attend something tomorrow night, but it was really
25 important for me to be here because I have a chronic

1 illness and I'm on disability, so I'm on a fixed
2 income. I'm a single parent. I get \$150 a month in
3 child support. And I live – spend the majority of
4 my income, which is not much, in a decent living
5 environment for my son, because he's kind of at risk
6 as the situation surrounding are worse. And then I
7 can't leave there, because of the court order, so I
8 have to stay there.

9 I am not as well-informed as many of the people
10 who have been coming here. I've agreed with a lot
11 of what they say. My eyes have been opened a lot.
12 But what I did want to say is I'm one of those
13 people that some of those people have been talking
14 about. I have been sitting next to the President of
15 South Carolina, and I showed him my bill. And he
16 said he's never seen a bill so low – usage so low.
17 I have to be so careful with every single solitary
18 penny that I have, and my – I set my budget for my
19 electric at \$36 a month, and I normally pay between
20 \$33 and \$43 a month. Twenty dollars is my son's
21 lunches.

22 I'm in a lot of debt because of my divorce, and
23 so as a result – I'm over the poverty line, but not
24 by a whole lot, but not enough to get any sort of
25 assistance. So for me, honestly, my son asks me,

1 "Mom, can we turn the heat on?" And I say, "Add
2 another blanket for take the space heater into your
3 room."

4 So, I just want to say that there are people
5 like that. I haven't always been this way. I
6 didn't always have this illness and I wasn't always
7 in this situation. But I am now, and anybody else
8 could be, as well. And that \$20 is extremely
9 prohibitive for me. It was hard for me to pay the
10 gas to make the trip here today, but it was that
11 important.

12 And so that's what I have to say.

13 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Ms. Graffunder.

14 WITNESS: And I appreciate you. Thank you for
15 being here.

16 [Applause]

17 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Questions from the parties?

18 MR. NELSON: Thank you very much for coming and
19 testifying. I appreciate your showing up.

20 WITNESS: Okay.

21 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Commissioners?

22 [No response]

23 Thank you, ma'am.

24 [Witness excused]

25 MR. MINGES: Eugene Moore, would you please

1 come forward? Theodore Groves, you're after Mr.
2 Moore.

3 [Witness affirmed]

4 THEREUPON came,

5 E U G E N E M O O R E ,

6 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

7 WITNESS: My name is Eugene Moore. I'm **,
8 depending on who you're talking to. I live at 1211
9 Bolt Drive, B-o-l-t, Anderson, South Carolina
10 2962_[sic].

11 I didn't realize this was this type of meeting,
12 but while I was here, I thought I was going to be
13 able to do. My problem is this: I live at the tail
14 end of greed in Duke. There's only two houses
15 that's on the compactor that's on the pole.
16 Everybody else in the neighborhood would have power;
17 we don't.

18 It takes four, six hours for Duke to come out
19 to reset that breaker when a squirrel or something
20 set it off. And if they look, you'll see how many
21 times I have called. Matter of fact, they probably
22 known me by name. Okay.

23 Also, since I live there in a 2600-square-foot
24 house, upstairs and downstairs fully used, I was
25 doing what Duke says: Set the thermostat on 68,

1 leave it. Okay? I have baseboard heat. So that
2 means every room has a thermostat that can be
3 heated, or whatever. Okay.

4 I went the solar panel route. The first half
5 of a month, I generated 922 kilowatts of power.
6 Okay? But with Duke, from December through early
7 March, my bill would be \$500. Okay? Nothing set
8 between what I would generate with solar, plus I cut
9 all the power off in the basement, just to prove a
10 point, and kept a running chart. From this
11 timeframe in November, no heat in the basement,
12 power still – we still get the same amount of bill.
13 Okay? That new power that everybody's talking
14 about, that they stuck up or whatever, me and Duke
15 was in such a fight, the guy would have to tell me
16 when he was coming to read the meter, because I was
17 keeping a chart. Okay? Now, this new satellite
18 reading and whatever – okay – I don't know, but I do
19 track it by a monitoring system that Duke had.
20 Okay.

21 So what I get is, when I make a call, one
22 office to another office to another office, and then
23 you'll get somebody that's high enough –

24 [3-minute alarm]

25 That means time is up?

1 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, sir.

2 WITNESS: But I did get something that –
3 something by the Commission – uh –

4 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Yes, sir, we have – there
5 are folks here from Duke that you can talk with.

6 WITNESS: No, I want – I want that other one.

7 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Mr. Nelson can – will talk
8 to you.

9 WITNESS: All right.

10 MR. NELSON: Yeah, we'll –

11 WITNESS: Downstairs?

12 MR. NELSON: If you'll go downstairs – I wanted
13 to ask you a couple of questions, though.

14 WITNESS: Okay.

15 MR. NELSON: If I could, real quick.

16 CROSS EXAMINATION

17 BY MR. NELSON:

18 Q So this \$500, have you been paying this \$500 or so, about
19 the level you've been paying for a long time, or is –

20 A Yes. I mean, it's gone to in November and it goes
21 through, probably, March, whenever it's cold.

22 Q Were your bills lower before you got the new meter
23 installed? Has that had any impact on – or is it less
24 now?

25 A No. No. But that's what – I didn't get to get to it,

1 but what I'm saying, I – I went and had stuff shot in two
2 different floor levels, windows, [word(s) inaudible] boxed in.
3 All of this done. The guy that – this customer guy that
4 Duke sends out to evaluate what – where the energy is
5 going, he himself wrote it up and took back to Duke,
6 says, hey, he can't see where the energy is going.
7 Because I had a brand-new water heater, all this done.

8 Q None of that saved you anything on your power bill?

9 A Huh-uh.

10 MR. NELSON: Please go see our folks
11 downstairs. Appreciate it, sir.

12 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you.

13 [Witness excused]

14 MR. MINGES: Theodore Groves? Dennis Trimboli,
15 you're after Mr. Groves.

16 [Witness affirmed]

17 THEREUPON came,

18 T H E O D O R E G R O V E S ,
19 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

20 WITNESS: My name is Theodore Groves. I live
21 at 2605 McKinley Drive, here in Anderson.

22 And I've heard everybody, and I think they
23 came – they've been pretty well prepared and they
24 gave you a lot of good information. And so I don't
25 have a lot to add to it, but what I do know is Duke

1 spends a lot of money on lobbying the politicians.

2 VOICE: That's right, yeah.

3 WITNESS: And I just hope that the words that
4 these people told you all, when you all make this
5 decision, will weigh more than the money Duke pays
6 the lobbyists for the politicians.

7 VOICE: That's right.

8 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you. Thank you, sir.

9 [Applause]

10 Any questions for Mr. Groves?

11 [No response]

12 Thank you.

13 [Witness excused]

14 MR. MINGES: Mr. Trimboli?

15 [Witness affirmed]

16 THEREUPON came,

17 D E N N I S T R I M B O L I ,

18 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

19 WITNESS: My name is Dennis Trimboli, at 195
20 Graylyn Drive, in Anderson.

21 Thank you for the opportunity for this hearing,
22 as well as the opportunity to speak. I believe the
23 proposed rate of Duke is wrong, for reasons
24 mentioned by others, and for the following three
25 additional reasons:

1 One, let me acknowledge that Duke does do good
2 work for the community. But the proposed increase
3 will make Duke one of the most costly energy
4 providers in the country. There seems no reasonable
5 justification for this. What does it provide, to
6 what greater population does it serve, than other
7 companies?

8 Duke is not a good steward of its own
9 resources. For example, Duke's CEO made \$21.4
10 million in 2017, which was an increase from \$10.8
11 million in 2015. Another example: Duke does not –
12 Duke spends – as the other gentleman just said, Duke
13 spends millions of dollars a year for politicians.
14 It has its own PAC. Total receipts – for \$1.792
15 million, it spent \$2.1 million in receipts. That
16 means that Duke's spending more money on politicians
17 than it actually took into the PAC.

18 And if we go to the bottom line – let's see,
19 here. Let me go back. The most of the – many of
20 the politicians, not most but many of the
21 politicians are indeed not even in service areas of
22 the Duke services. They're from Texas, they're from
23 Michigan, they're from Wisconsin, and many other
24 states.

25 Additionally – I'm losing my track, here.

1 Third example – no, I’ll start here. As I
2 understand the proposed increase, there’s also going
3 to be pretty much a surcharge on bills for people
4 who use lower amounts of income. This puts an undue
5 burden upon those who are senior citizens, disabled,
6 and others who are on fixed incomes.

7 If you look at the poverty level in Anderson –
8 the City of Anderson, South Carolina, as opposed to
9 the State of South Carolina – in all of the service
10 areas that are mentioned on the website, Anderson is
11 much higher in poverty, people in poverty, than in
12 the State of South Carolina. For example, the
13 residents with income below the poverty level in
14 2016 –

15 [3-minute alarm]

16 – was 30.1 percent. The entire State was 20.3
17 percent. So, the actual proposed increase of the
18 surcharge onto the poor people, or those people who
19 use less money, is going to have a much greater
20 effect on people in this community.

21 Thank you.

22 [Applause]

23 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Mr. Trimboli.

24 Questions from the parties?

25 [No response]

1 Okay.

2 [Witness excused]

3 We're going to need to take a short break, and
4 we'll be back in a few minutes after we give our
5 court reporter a chance to rest her voice.

6 [WHEREUPON, a recess was taken from 8:39
7 to 8:46 p.m.]

8 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Okay, Mr. Minges.

9 MR. MINGES: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We're
10 ready to call our next witness. Frankie Eaker,
11 would you please come forward? And John Carlton,
12 you're after Ms. Eaker.

13 [Witness affirmed]

14 THEREUPON came,

15 F R A N K I E E A K E R ,
16 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

17 WITNESS: Frankie Eaker, and I'm at 738
18 Woodlake Road, in Anderson.

19 And one thing that I want to address is
20 customer service. To me, that is extremely
21 important in any business that you have.

22 Now, Mr. Keasler – he's already gone. But Mr.
23 Keasler and another gentleman touched on it a little
24 bit. We have – every time I've called, just about,
25 Duke Energy, it's just been so difficult to get

1 through to anybody who can answer my questions or
2 resolve my problem.

3 Now, one thing that I want to address is, when
4 we had a detached garage built last year – let me
5 just preface this by saying I have heard some really
6 sad stories here tonight, and I'm very humbled and
7 saddened by what I heard. We're not in dire straits
8 like some people are, and I don't say that – I say
9 that very humbly. But I have really been saddened
10 tonight to hear some of the stories where people
11 have to live and what they have to give up in order
12 to pay their Duke Energy bill. That's very sad to
13 me.

14 But we had a detached garage built last year,
15 and we were trying to get a meter set. And I know
16 you have addressed this, the – what's this
17 gentleman's name? I can't remember, with the Office
18 of Regulatory Staff?

19 MR. NELSON: Jeff Nelson.

20 WITNESS: Mr. Nelson, thank you. You have
21 addressed that, and I want to go downstairs and get
22 a contact number for your office, as well. But when
23 we had this detached garage built, we were trying to
24 get the meter set, and we were told – it is about
25 two weeks before anybody could even let us know

1 anything for sure. So we were told on a Tuesday,
2 "It will be set on Thursday." Thursday came; it
3 wasn't set. And we'd been waiting because the
4 electrician had to come back and do some things
5 after the meter was set, and so forth. So we
6 finally got it set the following Monday, but not
7 before – they didn't come on that Thursday they said
8 they would, and then they didn't come on the Friday
9 they said they would – or didn't see anybody Friday.
10 Then when I called the original engineer on Monday,
11 he said, "They're on their way," and indeed they
12 were there at our house in a few minutes.

13 Now, one thing that would help with the
14 customer service, and I think would help with some
15 of these problems that people have – and Mr. Keasler
16 touched on it as well – if we had a place, an
17 office, to go to, to have these concerns addressed,
18 that would eliminate a lot of Duke Energy's problems
19 and it would eliminate a lot of the problems that
20 you've heard tonight. People just want to be heard.
21 They don't want to talk to three or four people
22 before they even think that they're going to get
23 their problem resolved. They want to talk to – they
24 want to talk to one person. And I'm here to tell
25 you that some of the people I've talked to as

1 customer service representatives for Duke Energy, I
2 felt like I knew more about what I was needing and
3 what I needed to get resolved than they did. I've
4 talked to some people who were not very efficient,
5 they were not professional, and it was very
6 upsetting to me.

7 So customer service needs to improve with Duke
8 Energy, and if we had a local office to go to – I've
9 been in Anderson long enough, and if I'm not
10 mistaken, the office on Pearman Dairy Road was open
11 at one time –

12 [3-minute alarm]

13 I know my time's up. – was open at one time,
14 and if it could be reopened, or another office could
15 be opened, it would be wonderful to help resolve
16 some of these problems.

17 Thank you so much for listening to me tonight.

18 [Applause]

19 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Ms. Eaker.

20 Questions from the parties?

21 MR. NELSON: No questions. Thank you, ma'am.

22 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you. Thank you,
23 ma'am.

24 WITNESS: Thank you.

25 [Witness excused]

1 MR. MINGES: John Carlton, please come
2 forward?

3 [No response]

4 Connie Paul, are you here?

5 [No response]

6 Gordon Howard, would you please come forward?

7 [Witness affirmed]

8 THEREUPON came,

9 G O R D O N E . H O W A R D ,
10 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

11 WITNESS: I'm Gordon Howard. P.O. Box 8097,
12 Seneca, South Carolina.

13 In regards to disclosure, I'm not related to
14 Commissioner Howard over there, that I know of.

15 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Probably a good thing.

16 [Laughter]

17 WITNESS: I am a customer. I'm also a Duke
18 beneficial shareholder. All right?

19 On my bill last June, I received something, a
20 notice, saying there was an adjustment, all right?
21 This adjustment of 17 percent of my 2018 total bill.
22 All right? So I'm concerned about that, because now
23 we're going to add another 12 percent adjustment to
24 my bill, which would take it up to 29 percent
25 increase. I'm not in favor of that. Okay?

1 These types of increases, as you've heard here
2 tonight, are relegating the Duke customers to the
3 role of sharecropper or indentured servant. They're
4 going to be working for Duke and not for the
5 betterment of themselves or the welfare of their
6 children or their family.

7 Typically, when a company wants to raise money
8 for capital improvements, they sell stock. They use
9 that money from the stock to do the capital
10 improvements. So I'm asking the Commission to
11 decline this request, unless Duke is willing to
12 issue stock to the investors, which are the
13 customers here, for which they will then receive a
14 dividend and the right to vote on the management and
15 operation of the country – company.

16 Thank you very much. Appreciate it.

17 [Applause]

18 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Mr. Howard.
19 Questions?

20 MR. NELSON: No questions. Thank you, sir.

21 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, sir.

22 [Witness excused]

23 MR. MINGES: Judith Parham, would you please
24 come forward. Ms. Parham, are you here?

25 [No response]

1 John Griffin?

2 [Witness affirmed]

3 THEREUPON came,

4 J O H N G R I F F I N ,

5 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

6 WITNESS: my name is John Griffin. I live at
7 2051 Avant Circle, Anderson, South Carolina.

8 And my question to Duke Energy is where in the
9 world and who in the world is paying for that coal
10 ash removal? That's a question.

11 How many trucks have you sent up and down
12 Interstate 85 going to Georgia? How many people
13 have seen those trucks? Anybody?

14 VOICE: Yes.

15 WITNESS: You been on 85? You'll see them one,
16 two, six of them at a time? I mean, it's just
17 unbelievable how many trucks go up and down –
18 they're wearing Interstate 85 out, going up and down
19 the road so much.

20 And I would like to know how many trucks since
21 they've started hauling the coal ash from North
22 Carolina, down, how many trucks have they sent to
23 Georgia? And Waste Management, they're not doing
24 that free. And we don't need to be paying for that.
25 And that's what part of this increase, I'm sure, is

1 going to be. Paying for removal of the coal ash.
2 And I haven't heard very much about it because, you
3 know, I'm a paying customer, too, and I get those
4 little notes.

5 I called Duke Energy in Greensboro – I guess it
6 was – and then they transferred me to Charlotte.
7 And then they couldn't answer my question, so they
8 transferred me back to Greensboro, or wherever – is
9 it Raleigh, or Greensboro? Where is the
10 headquarters? Does anybody know? Huh? Where's
11 your headquarters?

12 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Mr. Griffin, with questions,
13 you need to talk with a representative, the Duke
14 representative, in the back

15 WITNESS: Okay. But anyway, you know, it's
16 just unreal. I got a little letter from Duke Energy
17 and it said, "Call this number if you want to get on
18 a program we have." I called the number, and the
19 lady said, "I'm sorry, we don't have it up and
20 running yet." I mean, that's ridiculous, send
21 something out and then they don't have it up and
22 running. So things like that happen, and I
23 understand it.

24 But I'm not in favor of a rate increase because
25 I am on a fixed income. If the Lord lets me live

1 till August 1st, I'll be 80 years of age. And I
2 don't want to have to go to my grave because of
3 Duke –

4 [3-minute alarm]

5 – Energy. Thank you.

6 [Applause]

7 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Mr. Griffin.
8 Any questions?

9 MR. NELSON: Mr. Griffin, if you could – and
10 I've been sending a lot of people downstairs to
11 consumer services. Your question's kind of a
12 technical one that we might could help answer a
13 little bit. I have this really smart fellow sitting
14 in the back of the room, Matt Schellinger back there
15 [indicating]. That guy can probably tell you what's
16 going on with the coal ash, if you want to stop by
17 and talk to him.

18 WITNESS: Well, this lady right over here
19 [indicating] can tell me, too, because I know her.
20 I've known her since she left Anderson, before.

21 MR. NELSON: Well, thank you, sir. I
22 appreciate you testifying.

23 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you.

24 [Witness excused]

25 MR. MINGES: Don Harven_[sic]. Don Harven, will

1 you please come forward?

2 MR. HARVELL: Could that be a mispronouncing?

3 MR. MINGES: Harven?

4 MR. HARVELL: Harvell?

5 MR. MINGES: 105 Heyward Avenue?

6 MR. HARVELL: That's me.

7 MR. MINGES: Okay. Please come forward, sir.

8 [Witness affirmed]

9 THEREUPON came,

10 D A N H A R V E L L ,

11 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

12 WITNESS: Dan Harvell, 105 Heyward Avenue,
13 Honea Path, 29654.

14 Mr. Chairman and members of this Commission,
15 you've heard what you've heard tonight. You've
16 heard pleas from those who are on such fixed incomes
17 that they just can't see how they can endure
18 anymore. You, as this State Commission, you are the
19 firewall between this rate increase and these people
20 who have paid just about to the limit of what they
21 can afford.

22 I've represented the taxpayers many times here
23 and at the Statehouse as a taxpayer advocate,
24 fighting against big government that's wasteful, but
25 it goes beyond big government; it also goes into big

1 corporations.

2 Now, I am a full-throttle capitalist. I
3 believe in the free market. We know what the other
4 way gives us; it gives us Venezuela. But, when
5 you're a public company serving the public, image
6 means a lot. And when you know that you're asking
7 the poor for a rate increase of this magnitude,
8 proportionally, at the same time you know that the
9 head person, the CEO of this corporation, is making
10 \$57,000 a day, salary, you have an image problem.

11 Now, the coal ash situation, I don't understand
12 that at all. I'm a railroad buff. I've studied
13 railroad history all my life. I like trains. I
14 never got out of it, as a child. Rail service is
15 what brought all that coal into Lee Steam Plant, but
16 yet we're hauling it out. We're hauling the ash out
17 in trucks. They're not even full-capacity dump
18 trucks. It would probably take 10 of those trucks
19 to fill one large hopper that could be moved out of
20 there by rail. So where is the efficiency in this?

21 Another thing – and this is just a little pet
22 peeve of mine – every so often we get these mailings
23 from Duke about the efficiency of our homes and how
24 much electricity we've used, and if we're doing a
25 good job saving electricity or not. Those come in

1 separate mailings from our bills. Now, if this
2 company really cares about efficiency and giving the
3 right image to its citizens, why in the world – I
4 mean, can you imagine how much that costs in
5 postage –

6 [3-minute alarm]

7 – to send those out, when they could be
8 included in the bills, based on the number of
9 customers this system serves?

10 I could talk a lot longer. But anyway, I
11 appreciate you being here and I appreciate you
12 hearing our voices. Thank you.

13 [Applause]

14 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Mr. Harvell.

15 Any questions? Commissioner Ervin.

16 EXAMINATION

17 BY COMMISSIONER ERVIN:

18 Q Dan, we heard the same thing at our public hearing in
19 Spartanburg last night, about the mailers. And, in fact,
20 we got a copy of one for the record. So we're looking
21 into that; we asked the advocate for ORS to investigate
22 that. But don't you think they could at least mail it
23 out with billing and save the postage?

24 A That's what I've always thought.

25 COMMISSIONER ERVIN: Thank you.

1 WITNESS: Good to see you, Tom.

2 COMMISSIONER ERVIN: Good to see you.

3 [Witness excused]

4 MR. MINGES: Kimberly O'Brien, please come
5 forward? Chad Moller, you're after Ms. O'Brien.

6 [Witness affirmed]

7 THEREUPON came,

8 K I M B E R L Y O ' B R I E N ,

9 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

10 WITNESS: Hello. I'm Kimberly O'Brien. I'm at
11 309 Dogwood Street, here in Anderson, South Carolina
12 29625.

13 Originally when she asked me if I wanted to
14 speak, I said, "I don't know." Then I thought,
15 "Well, she said you can decline later, if you want
16 to." Well, I sat through this whole thing. I'm
17 probably one of the last speakers – I don't know –
18 and decided, "Well, I'm glad I signed up to speak,"
19 because the first two people I heard speak kind of
20 made me mad. They're up here saying, "Oh, Duke did
21 this, and Duke did that." Well, you know what? I
22 do stuff, too. My whole family volunteers. My mom
23 and dad volunteer at AIM, and have for years. My
24 kids volunteer. I volunteer. We do what we can, on
25 our limited little-bitty incomes.

1 Oh, yeah. For those of you – I mean, I don't
2 know what you all on the Commission make, moneywise.
3 We do – we've heard all about the big money that the
4 Duke Power executives make. But, and somebody asked
5 someone earlier what they make. I make \$30,000 a
6 year. I live alone. I'm widowed. And I try to pay
7 all my bills by myself, because I don't have another
8 person living there sharing my bills.

9 The sweet, precious lady that drove here – and
10 probably – you know, I know what it's like to
11 struggle to have the money to put the gas in your
12 car – but drove here to tell you that her budget is
13 like \$36 for her utility bills? She's freezing.
14 She is cold. I set my heat in the wintertime at 60.
15 At 60. And in the summertime I set mine at 78.
16 Where are those numbers? Duke Power never – they
17 tell you, what, 68? Set it down to 68 in the winter
18 when you leave home, and never put it over 72? My
19 heat has not seen 72 all winter. Okay? And I'm
20 sorry, you know, it's just ridiculous.

21 There are people out there that are cold in the
22 winter, trying to conserve energy. They are hot in
23 the summer, because they are trying to conserve
24 energy. And now you're going to put this – or Duke
25 is asking to put this, you know, horrendous three-

1 times rate increase on the base rate for these
2 people that are freezing in the winter. I mean,
3 that's sad. That's really sad.

4 I think they need to reconsider how they're
5 asking for their money, perhaps looking at square
6 footage of the home – I don't know. You know, I
7 live in like a little 1200-, 1100-square-foot home.
8 I'm sure some of these people that work for Duke
9 Power have like 6000-square-foot homes. Maybe they
10 should pay a higher rate than the rest of us that
11 are just normal people.

12 [Applause]

13 A couple of other things. Transparency?
14 Jeff – I don't remember; I think that's your name?

15 MR. NELSON: Yes, ma'am.

16 WITNESS: – mentioned transparency. I did ask
17 earlier – somebody said y'all were meeting on the
18 21st of this month, to start discussing a meeting
19 with Duke Power?

20 [3-minute alarm]

21 The 21st of March, somebody mentioned that at
22 the beginning of the meeting. And according to your
23 website, you still have some meetings, some
24 hearings, in April. So you've still got a lot of
25 hearings to go through, it sounds like, before you

1 need to be considering what you're doing.

2 I do hope you do the right thing – think about
3 Mr. Keasler; maybe some people need to go spend a
4 day with Mr. Keasler, the farmer, or spend a day
5 with that woman that is cold in her home – and
6 defend the people that really can't afford this
7 horrendous rate hike.

8 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Ms. O'Brien.

9 WITNESS: Thank you for your time.

10 [Applause]

11 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Any questions?

12 MR. NELSON: So I just want to clarify very
13 quickly that a public hearing – these are what we
14 call night hearings, the public night hearings.

15 WITNESS: Right.

16 MR. NELSON: The actual hearing on the merits
17 of the case where witnesses are called by all sides
18 begins on the 21st. And so that –

19 WITNESS: Right.

20 MR. NELSON: And you're welcome to watch that
21 over livestream on the Public Service Commission's
22 website.

23 WITNESS: Right, but you still have public
24 meetings to hear the people, according to your
25 schedule.

1 MR. NELSON: We have this one and then we also
2 have one – now, this is Duke Energy Carolinas.
3 We're also considering a Duke Energy Progress rate
4 case right now, so you may be looking at those
5 Progress rate case night hearings, as well.

6 WITNESS: Okay. And there was also an issue
7 on – when I went to the website over the weekend,
8 because I was trying to get more information about
9 this meeting, and it said "To learn more, click
10 here," and when I clicked here, all it told me was
11 "Call this number." So maybe it's been updated
12 since then, but over the weekend some of that stuff
13 was not available.

14 MR. NELSON: You can check downstairs with my
15 folks on the next floor, too, so that we can give
16 you both our website, as well as the PSC's website.

17 WITNESS: Do you have a Facebook page?

18 MR. NELSON: We do not have a Facebook page.
19 I know that there are Twitter accounts for the
20 Public Service Commission.

21 WITNESS: I think it would be nice, because
22 you've been giving all these people advice to go
23 downstairs and talk to us. I think it would be
24 really nice if you had a Facebook page and posted
25 things like, "Are you having problems getting help

1 with this? Call us,” and give us a phone number,
2 and post something several times a week to the
3 public, so that they can know what’s going on.

4 MR. NELSON: We do that on our website.
5 Again, we can give you all that information
6 downstairs, so you can monitor it –

7 WITNESS: Again, going downstairs – you know,
8 it’s just like getting on a phone call and getting
9 switched person to person to person and all these –
10 you know.

11 MR. NELSON: If you go to ors.sc.gov, that’s
12 us.

13 WITNESS: I know, I’ve been there.

14 MR. NELSON: Okay.

15 WITNESS: Okay.

16 VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS: Excuse me, ma’am?
17 Mr. Chairman, point of privilege? Ma’am, the
18 Public Service Commission does have a Facebook
19 page. That man right there [indicating], Mr.
20 Bockman –

21 WITNESS: Okay.

22 VICE CHAIRMAN WILLIAMS: – can give you that
23 information.

24 What was the name of that Facebook page, Mr.
25 Bockman?

1 MR. BOCKMAN: Well, we have two. There's one
2 that's sort of focused on the Public Service
3 Commission's ongoing deliberations, this sort of
4 meeting. That's [Public Service Commission Of South](#)
5 [Carolina](#). We also have one that's more sort of
6 relevant and tailored towards the consumer focus;
7 that's [SC Utility Consumer](#). I encourage y'all to
8 follow both of those. Also on Twitter [@PSCofSC](#) and
9 [@UtilityConsumer](#), we're responsive there, so if you
10 have a question we'll direct you to the right place
11 if you want to reach out to us there.

12 WITNESS: And could you tell me that Facebook
13 page again?

14 MR. BOCKMAN: Definitely. It's [Public Service](#)
15 [Commission South Carolina](#).

16 WITNESS: [Public Service Commission of South](#)
17 [Carolina](#).

18 MR. BOCKMAN: And [SC Utility Consumer](#). It's
19 the same as our two websites.

20 WITNESS: [SC Utility Consumer](#). Okay, thank
21 you.

22 MR. BOCKMAN: Thank you.

23 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Ms. O'Brien.

24 [Witness excused]

25 MR. MINGES: Chad Moller, would you please

1 come forward? Shandra Bennette, you're after Mr.
2 Moller.

3 [Witness affirmed]

4 THEREUPON came,

5 C H A D A . M O L L E R ,
6 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

7 WITNESS: It's Chad Moller, M-o-l-l-e-r. It's
8 199 Philwood Drive, Williamston, 29697.

9 I'm coming here as a solar owner and concerned
10 person. I oppose the \$20 increase on top of our
11 current bill for the simple fact that me, as a
12 solar consumer, I paid \$43,000 for a 40-panel solar
13 system to go to my house. I am fortunate enough to
14 be able to afford that. Now, granted, Duke Power
15 gave me zero money to have a clean-energy carbon
16 footprint. Which is fine with me. The government,
17 you know, with my taxes and whatnot, I'm able to
18 pay down some of that expenses, but it still cost
19 me \$19,000 out of my pocket that I have to absorb
20 over a period of time.

21 My average power bill on a levelized plan was
22 \$206 dollars a month. I realize my power bill is
23 still going to be in that \$20-\$30. But when I'm
24 doing net metering back and forth is the only
25 reason what made it worthwhile for me to be on

1 that, which I'm thankful for that, but if you put
2 \$20 on the end of that bill, my cost of recovering
3 my expense of solar panel goes up. I'm fortunate
4 enough to be able to do that, compared to a lot of
5 people out there.

6 I'm kind of a nerd when it comes to doing math
7 and whatnot. Our national average rate of
8 inflation is 2.5 percent. It's actually a little
9 bit less than that, but at \$20 dollars a month,
10 that's a 10 percent increase on my monthly bill, if
11 I was still at that \$206 price a month, which is
12 ridiculous.

13 I'm one of these people that I realize it
14 costs money to run a business. And it's one thing
15 to say we're going to do a 3 percent increase or 2½
16 percent increase every single year, to absorb those
17 expenses. That's fine. I only get a 3 percent
18 raise at work. I don't get a 10 percent raise.

19 And that's my issue is when does Duke Power's
20 bleeding stop?

21 VOICE: Amen.

22 WITNESS: When do they say, "You know what?
23 Next year, we're gonna go after more money"? "Next
24 year, we're gonna go after another 7 percent," and
25 another 8 percent?

1 I only get 3 percent. Like I said, I
2 understand the cost of doing business. But my
3 carbon footprint on this – on this world that I
4 live on has been lessened because I'm willing to
5 spend that money. But then I'm being raped on the
6 back side for 20 bucks – and I know it's only 20
7 bucks, but to a lot of people that were here and
8 that are still here, 20 bucks is a lot. And I'm
9 sitting here right now, and I know you guys have
10 heard a lot. My daughter got hurt at church
11 tonight, but I sat here because my voice, I feel
12 like, I can tell you guys: Fight for us.

13 It's like somebody said out there, y'all are
14 our firewall.

15 [3-minute alarm]

16 Please don't let this be another 7 percent or
17 10 percent, or whatever, that they keep coming back
18 wanting every single year, because it's never going
19 to stop.

20 I appreciate what y'all do. I know y'all have
21 a lot to go on, and I'm going to add one last
22 thing. I have no other options. I only have Duke
23 Power at my house. I can't get natural gas because
24 they won't build a half a mile to my house, even
25 though I've done the paperwork to try to get them

1 to build it, because I won't put enough things in
2 my house. I can't even get water to my house
3 without spending \$16,000, so I'm stuck on a well at
4 my house that costs me money every single month. I
5 wish I could get rid of that 220 power.

6 So, thank y'all for your time. God bless
7 y'all.

8 [Applause]

9 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Mr. Moller.

10 Any questions for Mr. Moller?

11 [No response]

12 WITNESS: I got a hot date out here, by the
13 way. I gotta walk her across the parking lot.

14 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: There you go. Y'all be
15 careful out there.

16 WITNESS: Thank you. Thank y'all.

17 [Witness excused]

18 MR. MINGES: Shandra Bennette, would you
19 please come forward?

20 [No response]

21 Ms. Bennette? 407 Ramsey?

22 [No response]

23 Grady Hodges, are you here?

24 [No response]

25 Hodges? Wendy Chandler?

1 [No response]

2 Deborah Blake? Come forward, Ms. Blake. Mike
3 Kernells, you're after Ms. Blake.

4 [Witness affirmed]

5 THEREUPON came,

6 D E B O R A H B L A K E ,
7 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

8 WITNESS: My name is Deborah Blake, and I live
9 at 1614 South McDuffie Street.

10 And I think that you all are just being
11 greedy. Duke Energy does not need the money. If
12 you can buy companies with cash, why would you come
13 after poor people? And I think you should not do
14 that. It's disgusting, and you all should not
15 allow it.

16 There's too many people that are struggling
17 and now you want to stick us with something else.
18 I think it's disgusting on all parts. Right now
19 everybody's being greedy, especially Duke Energy,
20 because they do nothing but charge you for every
21 little thing.

22 Thank you.

23 [Applause]

24 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Ms. Blake.

25 [Witness excused]

1 MR. MINGES: Mike Kernells, please come
2 forward? Theresa Mims, you're after Mr. Kernells.

3 [Witness affirmed]

4 THEREUPON came,

5 M I K E K E R N E L L S ,
6 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

7 WITNESS: My name is Mike Kernells. I live at
8 6201 Highway 25 North, in Hodges, South Carolina
9 29653.

10 I thought it might be my duty and a great
11 opportunity to come before y'all to voice our
12 opinions of what's going on. I've just got a few
13 quick questions. On our bill, we're now paying a
14 monthly fixed 50c charge. What is that? Will it
15 still be continued? What would an outdoor light
16 be? It's now \$7.76. Will it go up to be
17 increased?

18 Many of the customers in Greenwood County are
19 on the old REA rate. When Duke bought the REA and
20 the dam, whatever they bought, they agreed to give
21 them a lesser rate than what Duke would be.
22 They're paying lesser than I am now, for the watts
23 or the fees or whatever.

24 But several years ago, I ran for Public
25 Service Commission, or tried to. I was green,

1 totally. When I went down there, I learned right
2 quick that I was not from the good old buddy
3 system. None of my relatives had been past or
4 present commissioners, senators, house of
5 legislation, governor, or whoever. I learned that,
6 at that time, they'd been asked back to – excuse
7 me – ex parte meetings between the Commission and
8 the companies they were regulating. I learned that
9 Duke and other utilities and phone companies took
10 and wined and dined the board members in different
11 areas. They'd been to Maryland, been to the State
12 of Washington, at that time. For three sessions,
13 they didn't vote on Commissioners. I remember Mr.
14 Hamilton and Mr. Howard being there. They've been
15 on it ever since they redone the Commission and
16 whatnot. They changed the rules on it. You had to
17 have a four-year degree and two or three or four
18 years' experience working under a utility or phone
19 service or whatnot – or that's what I understood.

20 I took it as a great opportunity to make
21 \$70-90,000 a year for four years. Working for
22 myself, I can't make that out here. When I was
23 working and drawing a – making a fair salary, I
24 paid my \$100, my \$200, my \$300 light bill, and went
25 on about my business, because I didn't think there

1 was anything I could do to change it. But right
2 now, I'm responsible for paying five power bills.
3 Two of them are residence, one's -

4 [3-minute alarm]

5 - a small shop, two of them are just the base
6 rates, and one of them is outside lighting. That's
7 \$100 access fee immediately, that I've got to come
8 up with. If this rate is granted, will I receive
9 any better service? Will I receive any different
10 service? Where will I be? I thought if you
11 increase something, you should at least provide a
12 better service for everyone.

13 I ask that y'all deny the rate increase. I
14 learned, too, that Duke and other utilities are
15 guaranteed a 10-14 percent profit or rate-of-return
16 or whatnot. If they're granted 12 percent, will
17 this not double their guaranteed rate? Would it
18 not take a House Assembly representative to do
19 this, instead of just the Commission?

20 Thank you.

21 [Applause]

22 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you.

23 [Witness excused]

24 MR. MINGES: Theresa Mims, will you please
25 come forward?

1 [No response]

2 Elizabeth Fant? Ms. Fant?

3 [No response]

4 Kurishia Martin?

5 [No response]

6 Doug Ramsey?

7 [No response]

8 Deborah Burns.

9 MS. BURNS: That's me.

10 MR. MINGES: Come forward, Ms. Burns.

11 [Witness affirmed]

12 THEREUPON came,

13 D E B O R A H B U R N S ,

14 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

15 WITNESS: My name is Deborah Burns. I'm from
16 Honea Path.

17 First of all, I want to say that I hate this
18 meeting was on a Wednesday night, because this is
19 my Bible School night at church. But I came to
20 voice my opinion. I live in Honea Path. I've been
21 there at my house for 38 years. My husband and I
22 try to keep our power bill low by unplugging
23 appliances when not in use. We turn our heat and
24 airs off when we go to work. We invested in a gas-
25 pack heat pump about 20 years ago, and it was the

1 best thing we could've ever done. I highly
2 recommend that Duke Energy's customers buy a gas
3 pack, if they can afford it. Paying a light bill
4 is a necessity, and it's not a luxury for us. You
5 have no competition, and that is the reason why all
6 these rate hikes is always going on. Therefore,
7 you think you can raise our rates whenever you want
8 to, and some people light bills are more than their
9 mortgage.

10 The real reason I'm here is because my son's
11 light bill has been \$194, and it's a lot of money.
12 That is highway robbery. The question that I have
13 for the panel is why, when there's a rate increase
14 for certain projects and once the project is
15 completed, why doesn't the price go back down? It
16 just continues to go on and on, and then you want
17 more and more and more and more.

18 I'm praying that the rate increase will be
19 declined, and I know prayer changes things, and I
20 know somebody with higher power can change things.
21 Thank you.

22 [Applause]

23 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Ms. Burns.

24 Questions?

25 [No response]

1 [Witness excused]

2 MR. MINGES: Forgive my pronunciation. Benite
3 Danie? Benjie Danie? Cherokee Road?

4 [No response]

5 Paul Schneider? Come forward, Mr. Schneider.
6 Vickie Myers, you're next.

7 [Witness affirmed]

8 THEREUPON came,

9 P A U L S C H N E I D E R ,
10 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

11 WITNESS: My name is Paul Schneider. I live
12 in Piedmont, 2217 Highway 86, 29673.

13 I tell you, I got some education tonight.
14 These people have taught me so much that I can't
15 even believe what's going on here, and all I can
16 say is I feel sorry for these people.

17 And Duke Power? Enough is enough. How much
18 is enough?

19 That's all I gotta say. Thank you.

20 [Applause]

21 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Mr. Schneider.

22 [Witness excused]

23 MR. MINGES: Vickie Myers? Kim Huskamp,
24 you're after Ms. Myers.

25 [Witness affirmed]

1 THEREUPON came,

2 V I C K I E F . M Y E R S ,

3 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

4 WITNESS: First, I'd like to ask the audience,
5 don't applaud or don't make any noise, because I
6 have three minutes to speak. Thank you.

7 When we talk about the ACE basin, I'm sure –
8 at least I hope – you're aware that Duke Energy
9 pled guilty due to the fact that – you'll have to
10 excuse me; I've got a – the spill in 2014, into the
11 Dan River. And when they pled guilty, they agreed
12 to pay \$68 million on criminal fine and spend \$34
13 million on environmental projects, and land and
14 conservation, and to benefit the river and wetlands
15 in North Carolina and Virginia.

16 One of the things they're asking is about this
17 ACE basin. However, I do not feel that it should
18 come from the people. Their mistake should not
19 come from us. They should have protected those
20 lands, prior to that ever happening.

21 Secondly, several people have touched on Ms.
22 Good's income. And I'm hoping that you are aware
23 of that, you know, her base pay in 2017 was \$1.2
24 million, and her stock awards was \$9.12 million.
25 She did increase last year, 55 percent. Her base

1 pay was \$1.34 million and her stock awards was
2 \$17.2 million. Ninety percent of her compensation
3 is either in stock or based on future company
4 performance. In other words, a rate increase.
5 Which means it's not guaranteed and it will not –
6 she cannot – this is not guaranteed to her, this
7 incentive for her performance. It's not guaranteed
8 unless she does perform, which is get this
9 increase.

10 If it goes below a certain level, so does her
11 monies, when it comes to getting bonuses. But she
12 could substantially get more in performance – and
13 this is coming completely from their website – if
14 she achieves twice the shareholder return, which
15 they make no qualm on their website letting you
16 know that they do want to be profitable for their
17 shareholders. Their shareholders, as you heard,
18 from the VP to the CEO to everyone high up, they
19 end up making money off their stocks, they end up
20 turning around and they give it back into the
21 company, so it's a continuum monster that they have
22 made for themselves to make millions.

23 A company that is asking for a –

24 [3-minute alarm]

25 – 30 percent increase should not be coming to

1 the people for a 30 percent increase when most
2 normal people don't even get – or, at minimum – a 3
3 percent increase on their income every year.

4 In closing – I would love to have five
5 minutes, but I do not, so let me go back to where I
6 need to close. Excuse me [indicating]. So, in
7 closing, I would like to – well, one thing I'd like
8 to talk about is the stocks; they do push for
9 stocks, they do push for making money expenditure
10 that they are making these CEOs. Again, most
11 persons cannot take this 30 percent increase.

12 It is going to affect people like me. In 2013
13 and '14, I come in front of your Commissioners.
14 Duke Energy asked me how I made my house efficient.
15 I meticulously went through. My – my heating had
16 been upgraded, I had changed all the appliances in
17 my home, I had changed windows. I live in a home
18 that was built in the '70s. I have did everything
19 to make my home efficient. So now, here we are
20 four years later. They are going to penalize me 30
21 percent because I have made my home efficient. As
22 the man spoke earlier, who is efficient, a lot of
23 people cannot afford what I have done. I should
24 not be penalized for something they asked me to do.

25 Lastly, as my Commissioners, I'm going to say

1 it again: We employ you. You protect us. Protect
2 us from Duke Energy. Do not give them this raise.
3 You have heard people tonight that can't afford it.
4 I alone would not be able to afford it. I shut
5 off – now that my sons are gone, I actually shut
6 off rooms so that I cannot heat them or cool them.

7 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Ms. Myers.

8 WITNESS: I appreciate your time.

9 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you very much.

10 Any questions for Ms. Myers?

11 MR. NELSON: I don't have any questions, but
12 thank you for testifying tonight, ma'am.

13 WITNESS: Thank you so much.

14 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you.

15 WITNESS: I pray y'all do the right thing for
16 us in South Carolina.

17 [Applause]

18 [Witness excused]

19 VOICE: You're pitiful.

20 MR. MINGES: Kim Huskamp, please come forward?
21 Inez Jones, you're after Ms. Huskamp.

22 [Witness affirmed]

23 THEREUPON came,

24 K I M H U S K A M P ,
25 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

1 WITNESS: Kim Huskamp. I'm at 408 Carpenter
2 Road, Anderson, South Carolina.

3 I really thank you. I know that the time is
4 late, so thank you all for listening to everyone's
5 voice. I actually appreciate all the time that
6 people invested in learning all this information.
7 I've learned a lot more than what I knew before.
8 So, I do appreciate all the thought and the time
9 people put into this.

10 I actually wanted to bring up the new meters
11 that were brought in, I believe it was the end of
12 2017 into 2018. Many people have stated that,
13 during the winter, during cold times, the bills
14 have gone crazy. And I ask that there be some kind
15 of check on these meters. I too called when my
16 bill got doubled, and I talked to my neighbors and
17 they had been tripled. And nothing had changed; I
18 actually had gotten a new roof. And all my bills,
19 my electric bills had dropped significantly since I
20 got my new roof. So, to see that it doubled for
21 one month, and it still has remained high when my
22 usage – I too have shut off rooms. I now have my
23 heat set at 67 degrees and 66 degrees at all times.
24 And in the summer, I try to leave it not on as much
25 as I can.

1 So I really would like – I know that this is
2 satellite. I did contact them and ask them to come
3 and check my meter. They refused to. I did ask
4 about replacing the meter with the old system. I
5 was told if they do that, I will get a monthly
6 charge on top of that.

7 So there has to be some accountability and,
8 unfortunately, right now we don't get any. There's
9 no way to prove that this meter is right, and I can
10 appreciate a satellite telling them the numbers,
11 but unless I know what the numbers are – and am
12 studious, as one of the other gentlemen here, and
13 wrote down what the numbers were that day – there's
14 no way to verify. So I do ask that there be some
15 accountability and that you will hold them up to
16 it, to be where they can be visible with their
17 numbers. Everyone's asking for transparency.

18 So I do ask that you please request that
19 transparency and decline this increase. There's two
20 more increases that have been put up, that there
21 will be one further on next year, or this year, and
22 then in 2020. So that's my request for you.

23 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Ms. Huskamp.

24 WITNESS: Thank you.

25 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Any questions for Ms.

1 Huskamp?

2 [No response]

3 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you.

4 [Applause]

5 [Witness excused]

6 MR. MINGES: Inez Jones?

7 [No response]

8 Tiffany Oliver?

9 [No response]

10 Ryan Thorne?

11 [No response]

12 Ms. Oliver?

13 [Witness affirmed]

14 THEREUPON came,

15 T I F F A N Y O L I V E R ,

16 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

17 WITNESS: Tiffany Oliver, 9 Ravencrest Drive,
18 Anderson, South Carolina 29621.

19 I just wanted to echo what the majority have
20 said here, that I'm against this rate increase,
21 that I am a single mother of two children here in
22 South Carolina, on a fixed income. And not only
23 that, I also represent two parents who cannot be
24 here: my son's father, who had to go to work, and
25 his folks live at 2516 Lindler.

1 So, the increase would put us all above our
2 budgets. This was something that we can't
3 physically pay any more. We live month-to-month,
4 and it's just not feasible, even though we are
5 close families. And also my mother – even though
6 she's elderly and she is also on a fixed income,
7 she – I have to provide food for her, because she
8 can't even fill her fridge with food. And this
9 rate increase of just \$20 would be detrimental to
10 so many people. Thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Ms. Oliver.

12 Any questions for Ms. Oliver?

13 [No response]

14 Thank you, ma'am.

15 [Witness excused]

16 MR. MINGES: Ryan Thorne?

17 [No response]

18 Christine Watson?

19 MS. WATSON: Christine?

20 MR. MINGES: Yes, ma'am. Please come forward.

21 Elizabeth Holloway, if you're here, you'll be next.

22 [Witness affirmed]

23 THEREUPON came,

24 C H R I S T I N E W A T S O N ,

25 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

1 WITNESS: My name is Christine Watson. I live
2 at 105 Keith Drive, in Broadway Lake, ZIP 29621.

3 I'm here basically because I'm just tired.
4 I'm tired of the increases, you know. And if you
5 do one, it's going to just follow suit every year.

6 So, I had a complaint. I have a light on the
7 corner of my yard. We bought the house in 2000.
8 We asked to have the lights turned on. They asked
9 if we wanted the backyard and the front yard. I
10 said only the backyard, because our house is on the
11 corner, and at that time we had kids in the
12 neighborhood and we didn't want anybody grouping on
13 the corner.

14 Okay, so now it's 19 years later. So, me and
15 my husband said, "Well, maybe we need to have that
16 light turned on now," because a lot of times I'm
17 home by myself. So we called and I told the lady,
18 I says – you know, I told her where I lived, and I
19 said, "You know, we have a corner light in the
20 front yard." I said, "We would like to have it
21 turned on." So she checked and everything. She
22 says, "Well, it's already on." Okay? So we
23 assumed, because we had to have the backyard turned
24 on, that, you know, we – if it be at the front, I
25 told her we didn't want the front on, we assumed

1 that we weren't paying for it. So I said, "Well,
2 gee whiz, you owe us money, because we've been
3 paying for all these 19 years for a light that has
4 never been on." And I'm sure, you know, maybe it
5 was us, but they told us that we'd have to have it
6 turned on. They said, no, you can – only the back,
7 okay? So I said, "Well, you owe us money." So
8 she – "Well, you're right." So she, in turn, went
9 to her superiors, and she came back and she says,
10 "Well, they say it's been too long." Well, I said,
11 "Well, gee whiz. We've been paying you all this
12 time. What do you mean it's been too long?" So on
13 that, she says, "Well, they won't pay." So I said
14 okay, and I didn't go any further with that,
15 because at that point I didn't know what to do.

16 At the same token, when we first bought the
17 house we had baseboard heating. We had – that was
18 electric. We had the air-conditioning system put
19 in, the central heating and air put in, maybe a
20 couple of years after we bought the house. And we
21 were paying at that point for that baseboard
22 heating \$600 to \$800 a month. It took us a year to
23 pay our light bills – you know, electric bills – it
24 was just so expensive. So finally, a few years
25 ago – because electric heat, to me, is warm, so

1 that's what we went with. At any rate, a few years
2 ago, we decided – I told my husband we can't afford
3 this anymore, so we started using our central
4 heating. So it was high in the beginning. So, I
5 called them; I says, "You know, I need to question,
6 you know, this electric bill. It's expensive."
7 She checked and she checked and she said, "Well, we
8 have you down for dual heat." In other words, we
9 hadn't used our baseboard heating for years, and
10 all of a sudden we're being –

11 [3-minute alarm]

12 – charged for baseboard heating as well as
13 central heating.

14 So this is what I'm saying: You're not
15 checking your stuff. That light, if it was out and
16 had been burned out, then Duke Energy people should
17 have seen it. We – they – we shouldn't – I mean,
18 they told us that it was – that we'd have to have
19 it turned on. They should have seen it. But we
20 had to do that, to find out that we were paying all
21 these years for a light that was already on.

22 So I'm saying, you know, you give them this
23 increase, at what point are you accountable to us?

24 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Ms. Watson. I
25 would suggest you all talk with the Office of

1 Regulatory Staff so they can help you –

2 WITNESS: Okay. Thank you, but I'm not.
3 Thank you anyway.

4 MR. NELSON: I guess people don't like me
5 saying that, but I can't help you sitting up here
6 right now –

7 WITNESS: Yeah.

8 MR. NELSON: – but I do have people sitting
9 downstairs that can help you right now. Okay?

10 [Witness excused]

11 MR. MINGES: Elizabeth Holloway?

12 [No response]

13 Dan Bowen?

14 [No response]

15 Margaret Patterson?

16 [No response]

17 Alesia Carrell? Please come forward.

18 [Witness affirmed]

19 THEREUPON came,

20 A L E S I A C A R R E L L ,

21 who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

22 WITNESS: Alesia Carrell. I live in Anderson,
23 South Carolina, and I want to thank you guys for
24 allowing us the opportunity to stay here and speak
25 and ask: Please don't let this increase take place.

1 It's rough, now. And I'm speaking on behalf of the
2 elderly and the rest of us, too.

3 We're already hit with taxes that are not
4 beneficial to people that are not, basically, rich
5 or well-off. They've taken a lot from us. It's
6 hard to make your home cost-efficient when you got
7 to constantly pay out to Duke Energy. But not
8 kicking Duke Energy in the teeth, I know they have
9 a business to run and so do we, but at the same
10 time it's just – I mean, I have three children and
11 I'm a single mother now, and I have a grandson. I
12 basically tell my children, "You can't turn all
13 those lights on just to have them on." I have to
14 watch the cost. They have to watch the cost. You
15 know, they have social media where they want to do
16 facetime and all that other stuff. Well, they have
17 to do it in the dark, because it costs too much to
18 have lights on all day long. And if you're going
19 to do it, you have to do it in the daytime when the
20 light – you know, you've got light outside.

21 I've even invested in solar panels and stuff
22 like that, but I now have a unit that basically
23 make my energy bill spike because it's constantly
24 running. Well, I have to replace that. But when
25 we're constantly getting these Duke Energy bills,

1 they're outrageously expensive. You have lights
2 downtown, and they leave those lights up for God
3 knows for how long, but they charge us to pay that,
4 pay that bill. I mean, I'm sure we're paying this
5 bill.

6 I mean, we're paying enough, and I just don't
7 think it's fair for them to do an increase like
8 that. If anything, they should decrease, all the
9 money that they're making. And I'm not being
10 selfish; I'm just saying it should be enough for
11 all of us to spread evenly. But, I don't know.
12 It's not fair how it is. So I'm just begging you
13 not to allow the increase. Thank you.

14 [Applause]

15 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Ms. Carrell.

16 Any questions for Ms. Carrell?

17 MR. NELSON: Thank you for testifying.

18 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, ma'am.

19 [Witness excused]

20 MR. MINGES: Vickie Chapman, please come
21 forward?

22 [No response]

23 William Meredith?

24 <

25 <

[Witness affirmed]

THEREUPON came,

W I L L I A M M E R E D I T H ,

who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

WITNESS: Thank you, Commissioners, for coming here to the Electric City. I don't know if y'all know this, but Mr. Whitner's statue's right outside. We've got Whitner Street, that's where Anderson became the first city in the Southeast to have unlimited electric power. So that's us. Mr. Whitner was a good citizen. Mr. Whitner eventually kind of developed what became Duke Power, or Duke Energy now. But key component, right here in Anderson.

And, you know, he was – like I say, he was a good citizen. I think probably a little better citizen than I'm seeing, because from what I'm hearing, these compensation packages are beyond belief. They are excessive and just exorbitant, and there's no way that a rate increase should be allowed – the kind of rate increase they are proposing – with these kind of compensation packages in place, especially when you consider – now, if this is still the case, or maybe it was never the case, but according to February 15, 2018,

1 Charleston *Post and Courier*, South Carolina –
2 excuse me – South Carolina households spend more on
3 electric bills than any other state. And that's a
4 little over a year ago. But to ask for this kind
5 of increase, with those kind of compensation
6 packages in place, when we're already paying the
7 highest rates in the country? It's incredible to
8 me.

9 So I would ask – and like a lot of people
10 here, I'm a self-employed businessman. Home – I
11 restored an old home. I have electric, I have – my
12 office is there. I have electric and I have gas.
13 When Duke Power, Duke Energy acquired Piedmont, you
14 know, I mean, you talk – somebody said earlier
15 about a monopoly? They got a monopoly. My
16 Piedmont bill practically doubled after that
17 acquisition. And whatever – whoever said about the
18 smart meters, I've experienced the same problem.
19 My meter – bill for my electric bill went from
20 something under \$100 in the last – over the winter,
21 to close to \$200 for the last bill. I mean, it's
22 just – and I've been using roughly the same. I'm
23 one of the most efficient households in my
24 neighborhood, according to the little mailer that I
25 get. So, I am; I'm frugal as you can be.

1 But anyway, I would like to thank you all for
2 coming here and listening to us. And I beseech
3 you – these people are struggling and I’m one of
4 them. I mean, it’s hard. And I try to be as
5 frugal as I can; we’re all trying to be as frugal
6 as we can. But we’d like to see Duke Energy be a
7 little more frugal. I mean, they’ve got operations
8 in Brazil, South America, Latin America, all over
9 the country. And I know they like getting paid,
10 but they’re supposed to be a regulated monopoly,
11 and it’s up to you guys on the Public Service
12 Commission to serve us, the citizens, okay? And
13 that’s what we need you to do. So, please reject
14 this –

15 [3-minute alarm]

16 – proposed increase. Thank you, very much.

17 [Applause]

18 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you.

19 MR. NELSON: Sir? I’m sorry, I didn’t get
20 your last name or your address.

21 WITNESS: Meredith. Here, I’ll give you one
22 of my business cards. Let’s do a deal. I need to
23 do some business [indicating].

24 MR. NELSON: [Indicating.] I appreciate it.

25 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, very much.

[Witness excused]

MR. MINGES: Mr. Chairman, that's the last witness who's signed up to speak.

CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Okay. I wanted to –

VOICE: I signed up.

CHAIRMAN RANDALL: – to thank everyone for –

VOICE: I signed up.

MR. MINGES: I'm sorry, ma'am. Well, please come forward.

VOICE: I signed up.

MR. MINGES: What's your name?

VOICE: Elizabeth Fant, in Belton, South Carolina.

[Witness affirmed]

THEREUPON came,

E L I Z A B E T H F A N T ,

who, having been first duly affirmed, testified as follows:

WITNESS: Okay.

MR. RICHARDSON: State your name and address.

WITNESS: I did. Elizabeth Fant, Belton.

All right. That's just a case, there, of not doing due diligence. There, I signed up out there, signed my name, checked "yes," and waited this whole time, and thought, "Gee, how many more people can there be?"

1 It's obscene. It's despicable. Duke Power is
2 a monopoly. The last gentleman is right. Piedmont
3 Gas? You really have a monopoly now.

4 We can't do without power. If we could, many
5 of us would. On my farm, I have three meters: one
6 for a second well, one for my home, and a third for
7 kennels, because I run a rescue and I have light
8 bulbs in the dogs' houses for heat. I go without
9 heat in my own house when the price gets where I
10 have to decide one or the other.

11 I have three bills. I called Duke Power and I
12 asked them, "Can you not send all three bills all
13 together in one envelope? And can you not do that
14 at one time during the month?" We could save a lot
15 of postage. It took eight months to get that done.

16 When the smart meter people came around –
17 again, these are people that are not Duke Power;
18 they're some other creatures from outer space – I
19 tried to explain to them that all three of these
20 meters were at the same property. Lady called up,
21 told me when one was going to be. I said, "That's
22 fine." Then I said, "What about the other two
23 meters?" "Well, we can't do those then. We can't
24 do those at the same time." So there were three
25 different visits to the house at three different

1 times to install three smart meters. That woman
2 didn't know Adam from me. I had to explain to her,
3 walk her through her job. They're right, when Duke
4 Power took out the local – in Belton, we used to
5 have a local office, and I know another town that
6 did too. When you took that out, you took out
7 customer service. You took out the connection
8 between Duke Power and the people out here that
9 depend on them to be a good citizen. Duke power is
10 now some global conglomerate. And you know what,
11 this V.C. Summer thing and the way that people had
12 to pay in advance for something they weren't
13 getting, and now will not get, and now we're all
14 going to have to pay for that? You know, that's a
15 big fat –

16 [3-minute alarm]

17 – Ponzi scheme. That's all.

18 [Applause]

19 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Thank you, Ms. Fant.

20 Any questions for Ms. Fant?

21 MR. NELSON: Thank you, ma'am. No questions.

22 [Witness excused]

23 CHAIRMAN RANDALL: Okay. That's our last
24 person signed up. We thank everybody for coming
25 tonight. We are adjourned.

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[WHEREUPON, at 9:48 p.m., the hearing in
the above-entitled matter was adjourned,
to reconvene at 6:00 p.m., March 14,
2019, in Greenville, South Carolina.]


[WHEREUPON, Hearing Exhibit 3 was marked
and received in evidence.]

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Jo Elizabeth M. Wheat, CVR-CM-GNSC, Notary Public in and for the State of South Carolina, do hereby certify that the foregoing is, to the best of my skill and ability, a true and correct transcript of all the proceedings had and testimony adduced in an evening public hearing held in the above-captioned matter before the PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF SOUTH CAROLINA;

That the witnesses appearing during said hearing were affirmed to state the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth;

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and seal, on this the 5th day of November, 2019.


Jo Elizabeth M. Wheat, CVR-CM/M-GNSC
Hearings Reporter, PSC/SC
My Commission Expires: January 27, 2021.